

The Southland of North America



George
Palmer
Putnam

Library of The Theological Seminary

PRINCETON • NEW JERSEY



FROM THE LIBRARY OF
ROBERT ELLIOTT SPEER



F1432
.P99

R. du Espen





Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2016



Suspended in a cage affair one is lowered to the lighter

The Southland of North America

Rambles and Observations in
Central America during the
Year 1912

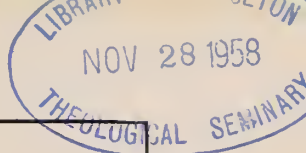
By

George Palmer Putnam ✓

*With 96 Illustrations from Photographs
by the Author, and a Map*

G. P. Putnam's Sons
New York and London
The Knickerbocker Press

1913



COPYRIGHT, 1913
BY
GEORGE PALMER PUTNAM

The Knickerbocker Press, New York

THIS SOUVENIR OF A DELIGHTFUL TROPICAL TRIP

IS DEDICATED

TO THE BEST OF TRAVEL PARTNERS

D. B. P.

WHO SHARED ITS MAKING

PREFACE



To equip a modest volume of travel sketches with a preface is, perhaps, a sin against proportion. "But a preface is more than an author can resist, for it is the reward of his labors. When the foundation stone is laid, the architect appears with his plans, and struts for an hour before the public eye. So with the writer of this preface; he may have never a word to say, but he must show himself for a moment in the portico, hat in hand, and with an urbane demeanor."

Such is the quaint prefatory paragraph to Stevenson's delightful *Inland Voyage*.

For this little book of voyages, which are both inland and maritime, there is small need of more than a formal bow to the public, made with the fond hope that there actually may be found an audience to which to make greeting. Such as it is, then, let this preface be a hearty invitation to

proceed further. Should the succeeding pages arouse an added interest in the territory they concern, and something more of an understanding of it, and, above all, a realization of the fact that at our very door lies an almost untouched treasure-land of fascinating possibility, they will have served their purpose.

G. P. P.

BEND, OREGON,

March 15, 1913.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. PANAMA, THE GATEWAY TO CENTRAL AMERICA	I
II. INTRODUCING COSTA RICA	10
III. THE LAND OF BEAUTIFUL VIEWS	39
IV. COSTA RICA'S CAPITAL	62
V. BANANA LAND	88
VI. BACK IN SAN JOSÉ	119
VII. THE OCEAN HIGHWAY	134
VIII. NICARAGUA AND HONDURAS	158
IX. ENTER SALVADOR	172
X. SAN SALVADOR	195
XI. EL DORADO	216
XII. SALVADORIAN SIDELIGHTS	227
XIII. INTO GUATEMALA	248
XIV. TROPIC LAND	270
XV. GUATEMALAN GLIMPSES	292
XVI. THE CAPITAL CITY	314

CHAPTER	PAGE
XVII. RUINS AND A PAINTING	336
XVIII. ANTIGUA	357
XIX. TO THE TOP OF CENTRAL AMERICA .	379
XX. YESTERDAY, TO-DAY, AND TO-MORROW	400
APPENDIX A.—STATISTICAL INFORMATION CONCERNING THE CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRIES	413
APPENDIX B.—THE MONROE DOCTRINE .	421
APPENDIX C.—BIBLIOGRAPHY	424

ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
"SUSPENDED IN A CAGE AFFAIR ONE IS LOWERED TO THE LIGHTER." (<i>See page 250</i>) <i>Frontispiece</i>	
PANAMA, THE KEY TO CENTRAL AMERICA	2
JAMAICANS LOADING BANANAS BY HAND AT LIMON, A METHOD NOW REPLACED BY CONTINUOUS BELT LOADERS	6
"THEY HAD NEVER GAZED UPON THE FACE OF A MURDERER, PRESSED THROUGH THE GROUND-LEVEL OPENING OF HIS FILTHY, DRIPPING DUNGEON." AN ACTUAL PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN IN CHIRIQUEI PRISON, PANAMA	6
IN THE SHADOW OF THE CATHEDRAL, PANAMA	8
LANDING IN A LIGHTER IN CENTRAL AMERICA	12
PUNTARENAS HAS "AN EXTRAORDINARY OUT-OF-PLACE CHURCH WHICH LOOKS AS IF IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN PLUCKED FROM SOME COUNTRY PARISH IN OLD ENGLAND"	12
A SLIGHT SOUTHERN EXPOSURE. TALAMANCA INDIANS, COSTA RICA	16
ON AN INTIMATE FOOTING WITH A COCOANUT PALM	22
A MORE CAPABLE INSTITUTION THAN A CACTUS FENCE IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO CONTRIVE	40
TYPICAL OF THE SOUTHLAND. TABOGA ISLAND, BAY OF PANAMA	40
"INSTANCES ABOUND OF THE DESTRUCTIVE COMBINATION—HILLS, RAIN, AND CLAY ON THE RAILROAD FROM SAN JOSÉ TO LIMON"	42

	PAGE
A TEHUANTEPEC WOMAN MAKING TORTILLAS. "A TORTILLA IS A SOGGY PANCAKE AFFAIR"	50
UNLOADING COFFEE. "THE CARTS OF COSTA RICA ARE UNIQUE"	54
COFFEE-DRYING PATIOS ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF SAN JOSÉ DE COSTA RICA	58
A CONTRAST IN SAN JOSÉ—MODERN LIGHTING AND ARCHAIC TRANSPORTATION	68
THE PRINCIPAL STREET OF COSTA RICA'S CAPITAL	68
A PLAZA OF SAN JOSÉ	72
"MORE CHARACTERISTIC OF GUATEMALA THAN OF COSTA RICA. THE STOCKS IN RURAL COSTA RICA"	80
"THE BOX-CAR TRAINS, WITH CREWS OF LOADERS, PICK UP THE BUNCHES WHICH HAVE BEEN PILED BESIDE THE TRACK	106
"HORSELESS CARRIAGES" IN CENTRAL AMERICA	110
SUPERINTENDENT FLETCHER AND THE MOTOR CAR FROM WHICH WE VIEWED THE ZENT BANANA FARMS	110
A TYPICAL TROPICAL VISTA	112
IN THE MIDST OF A "BANANA WALK"	116
FROM THE WINDOW OF THE SAN JOSÉ HOTEL WE SAW THE CATHEDRAL SPIRES ACROSS RED-TILED ROOFS	126
IN MANAGUA, CAPITAL OF NICARAGUA. PRESIDENTIAL OFFICES ON RIGHT	126
JAMAICANS CUTTING THE BUNCHES. THE ADJOINING PLANTS WILL REPLACE THE STALK CUT, PRODUCING BUNCHES IN ROTATION	128
"THE SCAVENGERS ARE THE VULTURES, GREAT BLACK BIRDS WITH THE SEPULCHRAL APPEARANCE OF PROFESSIONAL MOURNERS"	128
AT PRAYER IN A GUATEMALAN CHURCH	130
"IN WASHINGTON THERE IS A BEAUTIFUL MARBLE BUILDING, THE HOME OF THE PAN-AMERICAN UNION"	134

	PAGE
A GLIMPSE OF THE GUATEMALA HINTERLAND. "BEYOND THE GATEWAY LIES A PARADISE. ALL THE BEST OF CENTRAL AMERICA IS HIDDEN IN THE HIGHLAND REGIONS"	140
CORINTO, NICARAGUA, BOASTS THE RARE LUXURY OF A WHARF	148
ALONG THE OCEAN HIGHWAY OF CENTRAL AMERICA	148
NOT A TURKISH MOSQUE, BUT A SCENE IN SONSONATE, SALVADOR	180
OUTSIDE THE "MERCADO," SAN SALVADOR	182
IN DUEÑAS PLAZA, SAN SALVADOR—STATUARY, THE EVER- PRESENT BAND-STAND, AND THE RAGAMUFFINS WHO LATER BECAME A PEST	182
"IN PARKS AND STATUARY SALVADOR IS DELIGHTFULLY EQUIPPED"	184
"THE NATIONAL PALACE IS THE SHOW BUILDING OF THE CITY." HOTEL NUEVO MONDO IN BACKGROUND	184
THE STREETS ARE MORE POPULAR THAN THE SIDEWALKS	186
A STREET IN SAN SALVADOR	186
A "DELIVERY WAGGON," CENTRAL AMERICA	188
AN INDIAN TYPE, NOT CHARACTERISTIC OF SPANISH BEAUTY	192
"THE STREET-CLEANING DEPARTMENT PERFORMS UPON THE COBBLES IN A MANNER THAT WOULD DO CREDIT TO A DUTCH HOUSEWIFE"	192
CATHEDRAL AT SAN SALVADOR	196
A HIGHLAND COFFEE "FINCA," WITH DRYING PATIOS	232
THE COFFEE BERRY AT CLOSE RANGE	234
COFFEE IN BLOOM	236
"NEARLY EVERY LANDING IS MADE THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF LIGHTERS"	250
ONE OF THE FEW FINE ROADS IN SALVADOR	250

	PAGE
BARBED WIRE FOR HONDURAS. PRIMITIVE LIGHTERING METHOD AT AMAPALA	252
AMAPALA, HONDURAS	252
HOW FREIGHT IS HANDLED IN THE SOUTHLAND	254
"THE VOLCANO AGUA DOMINATES EVERY GUATEMALAN VIEW"	258
"THE NAKED FISHERMAN FITS INTO THE BRIGHT PICTURE ADMIRABLY"	260
THE PEAKS OF ACATENANGO AND FUEGO, WITH ANTIGUA IN THE FOREGROUND	260
INDIANS ON THE TRAIL	262
SAN JOSÉ'S FEMININE BATHERS, CHIEFLY CLAD IN BLAN- KETS, CONFINE THEIR ACTIVITIES TO POURING WATER ON EACH OTHER WITH A BASIN	262
INDIAN WOMAN VENDING "DULCES" AT PALIN	280
A GUATEMALAN INDIAN WOMAN WITH THE EVER-PRESENT BABY	280
"CARGADORS," FATHER AND SON, CARRYING POTTERY	284
HAVING WRIGGLED INTO HER HARNESS, THIS WOMAN IS GETTING TO HER FEET WITH HER GREAT LOAD OF POTTERY	284
A GUATEMALAN MOTHER	286
SOLDIERS OF GUATEMALA	286
"ON THE SHORES OF LAKE AMATITLAN ONE MAY SEE WOMEN WASHING CLOTHES IN HOT SPRINGS THAT BOIL UP CONVENIENTLY"	288
"I SNAPPED TWO WORTHIES IN ACTION, BUT DID NOT MAN- AGE TO GET IT UNTIL THEY WERE 'BREAKING AWAY'"	288
IN THE MINERVA TEMPLE, GUATEMALA CITY	298
THE GUATEMALAN WOMEN BALANCE BURDENS ON THEIR HEADS	298
"CARGADORS" IN THE CITY STREETS	316

ILLUSTRATIONS

xiii

	PAGE
CHURCH OF EL CARMEN, GUATEMALA CITY	316
THE UNIQUE CONCRETE RELIEF MAP OF GUATEMALA	320
THE TEATRO COLON, GUATEMALA'S NATIONAL THEATRE	320
A STREET IN GUATEMALA CITY	324
WHEN THE RENT IS NOT PAID A BODY IS THROWN OUT FROM THE GRAVEYARD	324
MANUEL ESTRADA CABRERA TEMPLE OF MINERVA, GUATE- MALA	328
BULL-BAITING AT GUARDIA VIEJO	328
A RELIC OF MAYAN ART, QUIRIGUA	344
A VIEW OF THE RAIN-WASHED GUATEMALAN COUNTRYSIDE	344
QUARTERS OF BANANA MEN AT QUIRIGUA	358
ANTIGUA IS A SPECTRE OF FORMER MAGNIFICENCE	358
THE VIEW OF ANTIGUA AND THE MOUNTAIN AGUA FROM THE HOTEL WINDOW	366
AN INDIAN WOMAN OF ANTIGUA SHELLING CORN	368
"IN THE RUINS OF LA CONCEPTION COWS GRAZE WHERE 'PADRES' WERE WONT TO PONDER".	368
"A CANDLE FACTORY OCCUPIES THE SHADOWED DEPTHS OF WHAT WAS ONCE A CHAPEL."	370
ONE OF THE MONUMENTS AMONG THE RUINS AT QUIRIGUA	370
AT WORK IN A COFFEE PATIO	372
PRAYING AT THE MIRACLE-WORKING SHRINE OF SAN FRANCISCO	372
A WATERING AND WASHING PLACE AT A GUATEMALAN WAYSIDE	374
GUATEMALA IS THE LAND OF THE PUBLIC WASHTUB	376
CHILDREN AND CLOTHES ARE WASHED INDISCRIMINATELY	376
"WE AMBLED ALONG BROAD AND SHADED AVENUES, BOR- DERED BY 'CAFETELS,' OR COFFEE ORCHARDS"	382
AN INDIAN WOMAN OF THE ROAD	386

	PAGE
ON THE TRAIL TO LA SOLIDAD	386
ON THE SUMMIT OF TRES HERMANAS, WITH ACATENANGO AND ITS CRATER IN THE BACKGROUND	392
AT THE TOP OF CENTRAL AMERICA. THE AUTHOR ON THE SUMMIT OF ACATENANGO	398
INDIANS MASKED AND COSTUMED AT A "FIESTA"	398
MAP OF CENTRAL AMERICA	<i>At End</i>

The author is indebted to Mr. George A. Bucklin for his courteous permission to use several of his photographs on Guatemala.

The Southland of North America

The Southland of North America

CHAPTER I

Panama, Gateway to Central America



PANAMA is the key to Central America. It is that not only in a geographic sense; the construction of the Panama Canal is doing more than has been done in four centuries to awaken that dormant territory and untangle its political and economic snarls. So far as the United States is concerned, the Canal practically means the rediscovery of Central America; it has focussed national attention southward, arousing a sudden surprised realisation that between us and our new transcontinental waterway lies a little-known land of glowing possibilities, unique problems, and grave responsibilities.

Central America is all that, and more. It is,

especially, a delightful pasture new, wherein the traveller, who is equipped with a moderately healthy liver, a passable temper, and an inquisitive disposition, may browse with peculiar satisfaction. For those blessed with these triple characteristics, the experience is recommended, while it may safely be indulged in even should two of the three be lacking, for after all, a superabundance of the last named, combined generously with enthusiasm, will offset other shortcomings.

While Panama is the gateway to Central America to-day, and has been for centuries, to-morrow its Canal will more than ever be the "Open Sesame" of the west coast, both north and south. There is no doubt that after 1915, a great tourist travel will filter *through* the Isthmus, as hitherto passers have made their way *across* it, in one manner and another, since Balboa first discovered to what a puny neck of land the great western continents here narrow, a discovery made almost exactly four hundred years before the official opening of the big ditch that will transform this historic isthmus into an equally historic strait.

From the Canal, these sightseekers of to-morrow will scatter to the four corners of the earth. Many



Panama, the key to Central America

will descend upon South America, at last opened up to easy access; others will take advantage of the new trans-Pacific routes; and still others will flock northward to our own Pacific States.

Sixty years ago the "Panama route" was an accepted fact in transcontinental travel. Built in the fifties, the railroad across the Isthmus carried thousands of Easterners from one ocean to the other during the half-dozen years of gold-mad scramble to the Californian *El Dorados*. Since then, broadly speaking, the "Panama route," has been almost a negligible quantity, so far as North American transcontinental travel is concerned, thanks to the construction of the railroads and the comparative delays and inconveniences of the Isthmian journey.

But upon the completion of the Canal the "Panama route" from the Eastern States, and from Europe, to the North Pacific slope, will come into its own again and come to stay. It will open the way for a new transcontinental trip, and an amazingly delightful one it will be. Even to-day, with no canal, and crude transportation methods, it is that. And to-day and to-morrow the chief delight of it lies, and will remain, in the

fact that it opens the way to an acquaintance with the Central American Republics. To see something of these, and of this new transcontinental trip, was the reason, then, that in November of 1911 we came one night to the Tivoli Hotel at Ancon, on the Canal Zone, headed for Central America, like the bear that went over the mountain, "to see what we could see."

There could be no better prelude to Central America than a month on the Isthmus. Indeed, a Panamanian month well spent—and "seeing Panama" is so absurdly easy that it would be hard to spend it otherwise—can in itself include enough and to spare to equip the most avaricious writer with ammunition for a book. However, Panama is a story in itself, and one whose variegated chapters are told in so many volumes that to add further information and misinformation to the vast amount already in print would seem like overburdening an amply afflicted public. So, with your permission, we shall linger on the Isthmus only long enough to get acclimated.

If you ever follow in our footsteps, as I hope you may, take a word of advice: Don't for a minute imagine that the Canal, with its army, its steam

shovels, locks, cuts, yardage statistics, and sanitation marvels is the beginning and the end of Panama. It is n't. It's a world in itself, but it is n't all of Panama.

"They don't know a thing about the country—not an idea that there's a particle worth seeing outside of the blooming Canal," was the way one bronze-faced white-clad fellow put it. He knew his Panama pretty thoroughly, and entertained a supreme contempt for his fellows in the Canal army who never looked for interest beyond their work. "It's as if you went to New York and took in Broadway and the Brooklyn bridge, and then quit," he added.

Of course, in a month you can't begin to see all there is of Panama worth seeing and studying, nor in that time can you become even tolerably intimate with the details of the big job, which is undoubtedly the most fascinating bit of colossal human accomplishment ever crowded into a small scope—of square miles and of years.

The family of one high official we met on the Zone had never been to the ruins of Old Panama. *They lived six miles from them!*

Likewise, they had never seen Puerto Bello,

the burial-place of Drake, saturated with historic interest and present-day picturesqueness; they had never climbed Ancon Hill and viewed the Isthmian world's highway almost from ocean to ocean; they had never ventured through the gory, smelly, utterly characteristic market of Panama City, or bargained for fish and fruit on the beach beside the sea-wall, when the ragged little boats crowd in from the infinitely blue bay of an early morning and the strand becomes a rich replica, in colour, action, and babelous tongues, of the famed barter places of the Eastern world; they had never gained admission to Chiriqui prison, and gazed upon the face of a murderer, pressed through the ground-level opening of his filthy, dripping dungeon, wherein he is to live until a kindly death releases him; they had never staked a dollar for a ticket in the national lottery, the paltry price of a delicious thrill when the drawings are made in the Bishop's Palace near church time; they had never walked of an evening about the plaza, where the band played, rubbing shoulders with the gallantry and the worthlessness of five continents; and—save the mark!—they had never desecrated the Sabbath by going to a cock-fight, where native



Jamaicans loading bananas by hand at Limon, a method now replaced by continuous belt loaders



"They had never gazed upon the face of a murderer, pressed through the ground-level opening of his filthy, dripping dungeon." An actual photograph taken in Chiriqui prison, Panama

life is seen with the lid of polite restraint completely off, and wicked little birds whirl furiously at each other in an utterly depraved and cruel game of life and death.

Not they! As nearly as possible they live as they might have lived in Hoboken.

The moral is that when you go to Panama, try not to see the Canal alone, and its kindred monuments of American accomplishment, but also something of the rest of Panama, be it ever so little. For a healthy scramble of tropical impressions will be a far pleasanter souvenir of an Isthmian excursion than any chill statistical mental picture of the Canal could be. The latter you can get from guide- and other books. The former you must absorb for yourself.

After a month or more of Panama, we boarded, one evening, the *City of Sydney*, a Pacific mailer of eminently respectable age, which, just at sunset time, slipped away from the swelter of the inner harbour of Balboa northward through the quiet waters of Panama Bay

A sunset on Panama Bay is always an artistic event. Our particular one was a natural triumph that beggars description. Far inshore, above the

white roofs of the city, vagrant showers chased each other across the sky, clinging close to the emerald hills. In the very west, slanting rays of sun filtered from beneath a cloud bank, above whose ragged outlines, themselves tinted with gorgeous golds and pinks and opalescent tints, the palest of fleckless blue extended to the zenith. The shore hills, where visible through the mists, were darkly green, and in the foreground of the broad picture the waters of the bay were painted in with as ample a variety of tone and shade as characterised the sky effects; nearby the sea was calm and infinitely blue, merging shoreward into greens, and here and there darkened with rich ultramarine patches, branded by haphazard breezes. Finally, the afterglow faded and night's purple cloak fell upon the waters, broken by the pin-point illuminations of the city and the overhead brilliants of the tropical sky, dazzlingly bright as only near equatorial stars can be.

The mental aftermath of the sunset was interrupted by a chance hotel acquaintance, now become a fellow-traveller.

"Central America for a *pleasure trip?*" said he.

We pled guilty, and drew him out, which was



In the shadow of the Cathedral, Panama

not difficult, for a pessimist always revels in his work. This one was supercilious in tone and dejected in appearance. He was a commercial traveller, a mixture of Jew and German and, presumably, several other things. His dejection, he implied, was because he had been "covering" Central America for seven seasons.

"For pleasure, eh?" he continued. "Why, man, there's no such thing down here. It's all a damned sweaty grind or an everlasting loaf. The climate's a fright. It makes your blood like water, a bit muddled with the quinine and dope pumped in to keep your spirits up. There's nothing at all to see, and as for the people"—here a happy Americanism tided over his conversational difficulty—"why, they are the *limit!*"

And having ridded his dejected system of that cheering message he went elsewhere through the scented tropical twilight to spread the gospel of Central American melancholia.

That was the beginning of a remarkably delightful journey. My adviser was simply one of the army of the blind who annually trot about the face of the good green earth, seeing nothing worth seeing, and appreciating nothing at all.

CHAPTER II

Introducing Costa Rica



PUNTARENAS, or Sandy Point, is the Pacific sea entrance to Costa Rica, the southernmost of the Central American Republics. As north-and-south inland travel, at least across the borders of any of the countries, is practically a negligible quantity, thanks to the lack of roads, Costa Rica's two ports, Puntarenas on the west and Limon on the east, offer the only gateways to the interior highlands. And it is in this high hinterland that the true beauty of the truly beautiful land lies, as cool and healthful as the coastal plains are torrid and fever-infested.

Two hot days of lazy sailing northward from Panama, often in sight of the verdant, low-lying shores, brought the *Sydney* to the port, which is nothing more than a roadstead. The ship anchored about a mile from the surf line.

It was shortly after noon, which means two

things, on an average tropical day; the first, that the breeze was a much missed minus quantity; and the second, that Puntarenas was enjoying the early afternoon siesta, from which your Central Americano is not easily disturbed, even by the arrival of the Pacific mail packet, an irregular occurrence of supreme importance at most of the ports. So we waited, while the oily swell advanced upon the beach, there indolently curling over in a line of white foam beyond which the heat waves flickered up from the iron roofing of the pier and customs buildings with a discomfiting promise of even greater breathlessness ashore.

In the course of time, there was a stir at the end of the spindle-shanked wharf, and a very official boat, with official flags and an officially leisurely crew put off to us. It was the port officers, the unescapable introduction to every southern seaboard country. Mind you, in dwelling upon the "officialness" of our Costa Rican introduction, in reality an apology is due the country. There is far less fuss and feathers, gold braid, and red tape, connected with a disembarkation in Costa Rica than in any of its sister lands, and far more of practical methods.

The important member of the boarding party was the port doctor. Port doctors as a rule are the prime factors at a southern landing, but this one proved himself a doctor par excellence, and a hospitable host and a rarely interesting man to boot. Which opens the way for a word descriptive of Puntarenas, *in toto*.

There are three notable things about the little port. The doctor, as may be suspected, is one of them. The other two are a saint and a consular agent; as almost any one knows, there are many dead saints and scores of dead-and-alive consular agents, but this refers to a live saint and a live agent, a double and notable phenomenon. The doctor is a Yankee of the straight New England cut, the saint a little Spanish lady who does a world of unheralded good, and the consular agent a racial blend peculiarly his own. His past is worthy of a Dumas, and his present often unworthy of any one, but invariably witty and kind-hearted beyond belief.

True, there are other appurtenances to Puntarenas, ranging from numberless naked babies to an extraordinarily out-of-place stone church, which looks for all the world as if it might have



Landing in a lighter in Central America



Puntarenas has "an extraordinary out-of-place church which looks as if it might have been plucked from some country parish in Old England "

been plucked from a country parish in old England and unthinkingly dropped in this out-of-the-way port. Also, there is an attractive plaza place with gnarled trees, some of whose branches have actually grafted themselves upon the branches of neighbours. The bright flowers of the tiny park do much to redeem the otherwise sordidly flat little town. But the truly important features of Puntarenas are included in the triple digest offered above.

To return to the landing, and the port doctor, one-third of the social valuation of the port, as we assessed it. Before he left the small boat, we thought him a Spaniard, for his keen bronzed face would have graced any Castilian gathering, while the ease with which he handled the conversational repartee that interchanged between his craft and the *Sydney* amply exercised his conversational abilities in the language of the country. But once he came up the ladder, with quick, crisp movement, none but the most unobserving could set him down for anything but a transplanted son of cooler climes.

"Well, this is good luck!" was our hearty greeting as we were examined for all the ills which

flesh may be heir to, by the doctor, whose name was Spencer Franklin, and whose New England birthplace, it developed, was separated from our own by a matter of but a few miles. So, of course, after preliminary greetings were over, we found a vast deal in common, and our own news budget of home events, though months old, was timely enough to one who had not seen the rocks and trees of Connecticut for five years. We were rowed ashore in a heavy long boat, our trunks piled pell-mell around us. The rowers were dark-skinned Spaniards, barefoot, and clad in cotton trousers and shirt; altogether, the landing might have been in a Mediterranean port. Reaching the spindle-shanked wharf that extends some two hundred feet beyond the surf line, we clambered up the slimy steps, our trunks, like the tail of Mary's lamb, trailing along behind us.

At the wharf and elsewhere there was far less of militarism than we had expected. Indeed, aside from a handful of uniformed—scantily—custom-house officials, gold braid and buttons were notable for their absence.

At the custom-house was faced the fundamental lesson of Central American travel: a super-

abundance, or even an abundance of baggage is to be avoided. Many trunks, or even few trunks, are a nuisance and an extravagance. If possible, fight shy of trunks altogether, on inland trips, and confine your wardrobe to large and portable bags, a good travel rule anywhere, and a particularly good one south of Mexico.

At Puntarenas, there is a tariff governing the transportation of baggage from the steamers, on the wharf, and about the town. Wonderful to relate, its provisions are actually followed. However, that it is not the "best tariff ever made" is indicated by the fact that when we were in Puntarenas the boatmen were petitioning the government for a "raise" in the particular schedule governing their activities; which goes to show that we North Americans are not the only people with tariff troubles!

The boatmen get one cent a kilo for bringing the baggage in from the ship, a hard row of half a mile or more. The landlubbers who trundle the trunks along the wharf have the better of it; their fee is two cents a kilo. Then there are further charges from the custom-house to the depot, all governmentally regulated. Aside from

the fact that they are artists at the time-honoured short-change game, payment is simple. Our total disembarking charge, including custom-house fee, amounted to \$8.10. If we had been baggage wise, which means baggage shy, it would have been half that amount. As it was, we left all luggage except an insignificant little steamer trunk in the care of the customs officials, and even that solitary piece proved excess baggage, as the railroad allows but forty kilos free. The average Central American has no baggage himself, and so sees no reason why foreigners should get free transportation for theirs. Which is reasonable enough, if inconvenient.

Geographically, Puntarenas is a sandspit, with the town strung along it, parallel to the beach, with its several broad streets some quarter of a mile back from the ocean. Within the sandpoint is a wide shallow inlet, with mud flats unattractive to sight and smell, at low water, and a muddy yellow current when the tide is in. Much of the town juts out over these flats, while at one end are the piers from which is carried on the considerable traffic with the country at the upper, or northern, end of the Gulf of Nicoya, for Pun-



A slight southern exposure. Talamanca Indians, Costa Rica

tarenas is the only gateway for the receipt of supplies and the exportation of ore for an active mining district, operated by Americans.

Nearly every building in the town is of one story. A very attractive plaza, or park place, is the sole item of beauty, excepting only the picturesque *playa*, or sea-wall, which straggles along the ocean front. And that is really no wall at all, but a rather dilapidated board-walk, with pretentious but somewhat battered concrete seats lining it, and an irregular row of gnarled uruca trees casting their shade for the most part where the benches are not, while the latter simmer endlessly in the sun. Back of the *playa* is the custom-house, and out from that runs a narrow gauge man-power railroad that extends to the end of the stubby wharf. Everything that is landed at Puntarenas passes over this tiny bit of track, loaded on diminutive flat cars pushed by natives.

For us, Puntarenas resolved itself chiefly into Dr. Franklin. The doctor is lean, thin cheeked, and clean shaven, tall, straight, and spotlessly clean in person and raiment, the last characteristic alone being enough to make him notable in a

latitude where cleanliness, if it truly ranks close to godliness, speaks poorly for the popularity of the latter. His interests cover a broad field; primarily, he is a physician, and an enthusiastic one; next he seems to be a rover and something of an adventurer; thirdly, he is a devotee of archæology. Incidentally, he is boss of Puntarenas—and it may be remarked that it takes an all-round man to boss a west coast port successfully.

The natives call him *Doctor Arremangado*, or “the doctor with his sleeves rolled up,” and well he seemed to deserve the title, for the time of our brief visit was a succession of activities for him. Patients galore came and were treated, and a little work room was the scene of several operations, while no walk we took was free from interruption by some one who wished medical advice.

Mrs. Franklin is a pleasant American lady, vitally interested in the success her husband is making. Their seven-year-old daughter is being brought up in Puntarenas, and whatever she may lose in the advantages that might be hers in northern schools she certainly is acquiring a delightful facility with the Spanish tongue. The rest of the shifting household, when we arrived,

was composed of a young Englishman, his wife and a recently arrived baby, all infinitely British. The family had been stranded at Puntarenas for a month. They were on their way to a brother in Nicaragua and had been delayed, as all things on the west coast are, by the vagaries of the Pacific mail schedule, when the tiny Miss W. threatened to arrive on the scene entirely without regard to the convenience of her parents. So the Waters were compelled to leave the steamer on which they were going northward, inasmuch as there was no pretence of proper medical attention on board—a quite customary characteristic, apparently, for the ships' doctors on the little liners are apt to be either totally inexperienced or so old that they have neither desire nor ability to attempt anything out of routine work. So the couple landed hastily at Puntarenas, and fortunately falling into the hands of the Franklins, were taken in and cared for by a host, as well as a physician.

A more extraordinary pair of babes in the wood it would be difficult to encounter at any out-of-the-way place in the world. Both were scarcely in their twenties. Neither knew anything of the

country to which they were going, and to both a baby was a quite incomprehensible creature. They had no money, few ideas, and a wonderful British complacency, that chiefly resolved itself into a sublime belief that "everything would turn out all right," which was positively discouraging.

"You know," said Waters, in his foggy accent, "we have 2000 pounds of baggage on the way, and the beastly stuff has cost us more than \$125 already. Really, it's positively atrocious, you know! Just to think of paying three cents a pound for getting it across Panama!"

That three cent tariff he holds as an international grudge against Uncle Sam and his isthmian railway.

We sympathised as best we could, and as the stranded pair were headed for the interior wilds of Nicaragua, with a railroad journey from Corinto inland as the first stage of the journey, with a baggage tariff beyond belief, we were glad for the sake of his exchequer and his already wounded feelings that the young father had abandoned his original intention of bringing with him from England, as personal baggage, a "piano, a case of books, and a beastly 'eavy crate of crockery, you

know." It is to be hoped that he, his pretty little wife, and the tropical born "Brooklet" arrived safely at their destination, and are living happily ever after.

All of which reminds one that no matter where you go you find Britishers, not only the first-class travellers, the globe-trotters of book and of actual fame, and the business men pursuing the trade of the four corners of the world, but also such inconsequential youngsters as these. They start out for Timbuctoo or Borneo with as much abandon and care-freeness as they would apply to a journey across the Channel.

Next to Doctor Franklin, Señor Marquez was our guide, philosopher, and friend in Puntarenas. He was, and no doubt still is, the American consular agent.

"The worst that could happen to Marquez," says Franklin, "would be for his liver to catch fire; there's enough alcohol in it to burn for a week!"

The Señor's history—at least, such of it as he vouchsafed to us—is delightful in its queer gyrations. Born in Venezuela, he received his education in a monastic school on the island of Trinidad.

I asked him if his early religious training stands him in good stead in Puntarenas, where there seems to be something of a shortage in such a commodity.

"Indeed yes," replied the good-natured diplomat, with a twinkle in his dark eye. "Religion is admirable. It helps one keep a balance. If it were not for my training I could n't stay in Puntarenas and keep sober as much as I do."

Observation, alas, rather leads one to believe that reckoning the advantageous results of his monastic training on such a basis, a more complete course would have done no serious harm. But be that as it may, a kinder, wittier, and altogether more courteous gentleman than the Señor is not to be found in all Central America. The American coat of arms hangs over his front door; on the reverse, inside, the wall is adorned with a cheerfully flamboyant beer seal proclaiming the gastronomic delights of a beverage that is purported to have made a middle western city famous. Which of the two insignia is the more revered by the Puntarenan populace it would be difficult to say.

His position as consular agent is merely an avocation for Señor Marquez, his chief interest



On an intimate footing with a cocoanut palm

being the conduct of a general trading and commission business, which apparently embraces about everything from hides and lumber to the bartering of liquors and groceries. As his income from official duties for the month preceding our arrival had reached the munificent total of seventeen *colones*, or about eight dollars, it will be apparent that other sources of revenue were requisite.

"But think of the honour of being a diplomat!" says the Señor, with a magnificent wave of his hand, and an always ready smile.

This man speaks French, English, and Spanish fluently, and possesses an excellent knowledge of Greek and Latin. He has seen life—tropical life—from top to bottom, which means that he has about run the gamut of human possibilities. He is clever, shrewd, witty, and when he chooses, his manners and conversation would grace any company. Marquez lives in Puntarenas, and lives there contentedly, with no apparent desire to go elsewhere. He makes a little money, drinks a little, gambles a little; every day he has a siesta; altogether, he is typical enough of scores of tropical dwellers with a minimum of initiative and

vitality, and a maximum of desire for the *dolce far niente* existence.

Doña Amelia Santos and the little hospital of San Rafael comprise an integral and important part of Puntarenas. Both are retiring and difficult to find. Doña Amelia is the saint.

I met Doña Amelia in the tiny whitewashed office of the hospital, which stands near the beach in a remote corner of the straggling town. There is a high wall about the shady grounds, a cluster of cool-leaved palms, and an air of seclusion. Doña Amelia is a little lady, Spanish, and dark. She speaks slowly and in a low voice—speaks English, for she received her nursing education at an American training school. She is a little grey, and more than a little sad, and frail, even though her movements are quick and decided.

We met and talked, chiefly of her work, there in the poverty-stricken hospital—a poverty that came to be inspiring, as I learned its story, and the story of its guiding angel.

“How is the hospital supported?” I had asked the Doctor. For answer he had nodded at Doña Amelia. The government sometimes is slow about supplying money for the institution, and

then the kind-eyed, grey-haired woman who rules it somehow scrapes up a little money, the gap is bridged over, and the hospital's doors remain open for the poor.

"Heaven only knows how much the government owes Doña Amelia," said the Doctor. "I'm certain she herself has no idea exactly how much of her own money has gone to the support of the hospital. She seems satisfied with the pay she gets in the smiles and blessings of the patients. And as at some time or other about every one in the country has been in the wards, there is no one so generally beloved as she."

One poor fellow had been upon a cot for many months, terribly diseased. Finally he was cured, and sent forth a strong man. He gave Doña Amelia all he had. It was a silver piece, one *colon*. And Doña Amelia prizes that fifty cent piece mightily.

In the office there is a rack with many small nails, and on each nail is hung a tiny trinket, made of silver, which has been given the hospital by patients. Many of the quaint souvenirs, called *milagros*, are figures of men, about half an inch high, others are of fish, if the patient was a fisher-

man, while some are tiny models of legs or arms, the limb whose misfortunes brought the patients to the hospital. One miniature represented a man on horseback, exquisitely executed in silver, the entire work not an inch in height.

Doña Amelia once was rich. Then her husband died, and she went north to study nursing, taking a four years' course in the University of Pennsylvania and working in hospitals. After that there was practical experience in Cuba, and then home to the Puntarenas hospital for the last seven years, where her labour has made her a veritable saint, revered scarcely second to the hospital's patron saint, Rafael, whose effigy stands with a candle always burning before it in an elaborate altar place, a great silver fish beside him.

Doña Amelia related the legend of San Rafael:

Once there was a poor man who laboured constantly burying the dead, out of charity. After working excessively he lay down to rest unprotected, and upon awakening, found that he had been stricken blind. Whereupon he sent forth his son to seek certain moneys he had, and on the road the son was met by San Rafael, to whom he told the tale of his father's affliction. San Rafael then

showed the boy a great fish on the beach, telling him to get the fish's gall-bladder and take it to his blind father and apply it to his eyes, which the son did, and sight was restored.

The hospital has beds for fifty, about half of them being occupied when we visited it. As the Doctor enters the clean, bare wards every inmate who is able to do so, rises.

"*Buenos dias*," says the Doctor, cheerily, and a conglomerate "good-morning," given with the greatest good-will, echoes through the room.

Several of the cases were hookworm, all well on the way to recovery. One old man had heart trouble. He evidently was something of a gay Lothario, and no sooner was in good enough shape to go out than too much attention to the fair sex again demoralised his physique.

The Doctor gave him a lecture.

"A man with your heart simply must give up plural wives," he advised. "You're married too much. Cut it out." The negro grinned, and agreed. He always does agree.

Among the charitable deeds of Doña Amelia of which the world knows—and there are many unheard of—is her adoption of a motherless little

girl; also, she is caring for two boys, whom chance left at the hospital, to grow up like weeds were it not for the good woman whose life-work is bringing happiness to others in place of suffering.

Music, you must know, is the alpha and omega of Central American social life. Costa Rican statistics, for instance, show a larger expenditure for public bands than for the maintenance of prisons. We had our introduction to this at the semi-weekly public concert given by the semi-military band. On one side of the *playa*, where the band played, is the port street, with the custom-house and a few sprawling buildings that include the club-house, where one can play pool and drink concoctions damaging to the liver, and on the other the sloping beach and the white breakers which loll in from the lazy ocean, quiet and blue and peacefully Pacific. Across the water at the west the sun dropped out of sight behind purple shore-hills and picturesque palm fronds. Thereupon the musicians played their last tune and pompously retired to the barracks.

As all the women have black hair, a golden locked girl is decidedly a rarity, and envied as such. So the demand for peroxide and other

bleaching concoctions is out of all proportion to the population. The grotesque result is an occasional white-haired child, ambling beside a mother whose hair is raven. Mrs. Franklin's little girl has golden curls. The mother of a child with ashen pale hair asked her why she did not improve her daughter's looks by bleaching out the unpleasant golden strain, and get a real aristocratic white. When Mrs. Franklin laughingly declined the advice, this southern mother could not understand.

"It would make the hair so much prettier," she insisted.

In the evening there was more music on the Franklin piazza built over the inky waters of the inlet, with a conglomerate group figuring alternately as performers and audience.

First among the non-Yankees came Señor Torres, Doctor Franklin's henchman, who after mixing pills all day is a splendidly picturesque figure as he fingers his guitar by the light of the moon, and sings soft Spanish songs that would arouse the latent romanticism of a North Atlantic iceberg. Had he flourished a century or two ago, Señor Torres would have been a notable *conquistador* (in appearance, at least) among the roguish

gallants of the care-free Spanish Main, for nature intended the old gentleman for romantic walks of life—far more romantic than the peddling of drugs under the supervision of a Yankee physician. His face is moulded handsomely, with aquiline nose, strong grey eyes beneath shaggy brows that would have done credit to a Morgan, and a goatee trimmed to perfection beneath his square brown chin. His thick hair is iron grey and wavy, and altogether good to look upon in a man past sixty, and then, too, the Señor's clothes are elegant beyond compare, and his linen spotlessly fresh. Add to it all that he is well over six feet in height, gracefully proportioned, plays the guitar entrancingly and sings with the restrained fervor of an operatic star, and one can understand that even to-day there arises something of a sigh among the fair ones of Puntarenas when Señor Torres, Castilian cavalier, passes by.

A handsome native lawyer, with an enchanting moustache, white ducks, and no English, also played a guitar. Dolloring, American by birth, and prospector by choice, was the other member of the performing trio. He played the fiddle, and later in the evening sang, in a low sweet voice,

several melodious verses concerning the heart-burnings of sweet Dorris, an unsophisticated country lass burdened with an inconstant lover.

Then there was Sykes, commodore of the local gasoline fleet, a graduate of Columbia University, who has been in the tropics long enough to know better.

"I 've been here twelve years now and don't suppose I 'll ever get away," said Dolloring, not at all unhappily. Sykes did n't tell me how long he has been in Costa Rica because I did n't ask him, but I imagine he will stay.

Sykes has been pretty well over Central America and had much to say, in a quiet way. He is disgusted with local labour conditions, chiefly because a friend put all his money into a big rice farm and when the rice was ready to be harvested could get no labour, there being none, and so lost his crop and with it his money. And to-day, Costa Rica is importing rice from the Far East by way of San Francisco.

What most disgusted Sykes that evening was the statement made by a distinguished Senator who had been visiting the tropics, as recorded in a San José paper.

Said the Senator: "I don't blame the Central Americans for disliking the Gringos they see. The trouble is that they have never seen any real Americans; only the scum of our worst class of adventurers and reprobates gets down here."

That sort of thing makes them hot under the collar in the tropics, which is an unnecessary hardship when the temperature attends to the heating so thoroughly.

Said Sykes: "There was a time when we got pretty disgusted because men like that broke into print, slandering us. But what 's the use? Anyway, the people down here know the truth of the matter. Why, look here," and he drew from his pocket a copy of a recent San José newspaper. "This editorial refers to the esteemed politician. I don't think he 'd like it even as much as we like his silly gas about us."

The article in question was a glowing indorsement of the Americans who live and work in Costa Rica, the men who "have made our country prosperous." It told the truth about the hardships they have suffered, their stick-at-itiveness, their determination and persistency, their courtesy

and deference for native customs. And after recounting how the tropicalised Americans have conquered the bush and won the respect of the Costa Ricans, the little Spanish paper had some very pointed things to say regarding gentlemen who ought to stay in Washington, instead of touring foreign lands and slandering the pioneers who have preceded them and won success by the sweat of their brows.

"And what makes me maddest," added Sykes, who was decidedly mad, "is that we are n't asking any favours from our dear Government. One trouble is that such a vast lot of utter rot has been written about the tropics in general and Central America in particular. The average American seems to think that every white man down here is either a defaulting bank-cashier, a story-book soldier of fortune, or a tropical tramp."

And while they were speaking of the prevaricators who write books and articles for a living they referred to the time honoured incident of the monkeys who always throw cocoanuts at the intrepid travellers' heads. The only possible trouble about this pretty picture is that no one ever saw a monkey in a coconut tree, and no one in Central

America ever remembers seeing them throw coconuts even at itinerant writers, who no doubt heartily merit the attention.

Another pet situation into which casual authors thrust their heroes and heroines is that of eating luscious, ripe bananas from the trees. Disadvantage number two, however, casts its horrid shadow over the pen picture, when it becomes known that bananas never get ripe on the trees, even in their native jungles. The corner-grocery-store habit of "lettin' 'em ripe," hung from a rafter, prevails even in the sunny southland.

From discussion of misinformed and misinforming writers the conversation drifted around to conditions in Central America. "Conditions" south of the Rio Grande, by the way, is another way of saying "politics." There were five of us who talked. Four had been in Central America each at least four years. All spoke Spanish. All were intimately familiar with men of all parts, parties, and professions, natives, Europeans, and Americans.

They could n't agree, and there you have a key to Central American affairs, if you can call a deadlock by such a name: *Those who are best*

informed agree in this alone—that there is no single, clear cut panacea for Central American ills.

On one matter all were more or less united. Said they, in effect: "Costa Rica and Salvador, of all the republics, are worthy of the name, and even in these the franchise is much of a pretence; elections are prearranged, and, to a mild degree—as such matters are judged in Spanish land—administration is on the spoils system." However, these lands have stability and a great measure of prosperity.

Then from these happier countries they went—still in agreement—to the sister republics. All the others are distressingly on the decline, said they. Population is decreasing, wealth vanishing, debts accumulating. Political rottenness is no better than it was a score of years ago, economic conditions considerably worse.

And what 's to blame? Where lies the cure? Ah, there I encountered the divergence of opinion. "The Monroe Doctrine is the root of the trouble; the United States stands by idly and allows the rank conditions to flourish, meanwhile forbidding other nations to administer much needed spank-

ings." So said one. He would have a military clean-up, followed by occupation.

"*Quien sabe?* Who knows?" says another. "Give them time. *Poco poco*—little by little—there is no hurry. And see, the Americans are getting about all that is worth having anyway. Give our men a chance, and they will control affairs and remedy bad conditions." That was Dolloring; he had been in Costa Rica thirteen years.

"Hands off! They must work out their own destiny," was the prescription of a third political doctor.

So we talked: of the impossibility of a union of the republics, of the muddled incidents of the political past, of the probabilities of the future, and of countless other things, for world-talk comes readily in the soft tropical evening time, when the hard rub of the daily grind is a million miles away, and it is as easy as not to build air castles, and easier than not to settle the difficulties of humanity in passing.

Brown was another member of the gathering. He was just what he would have been in "The States," or anywhere else, meaning that he was

the colour of the lemonade we sipped, which was nearly colourless. He had come down from the mines with a touch of fever, and was fairly well "doped" with quinine. At one time or another every one in the tropics has fever and quinine; "quinine complicated with fever," as one fellow put it.

The evening was not unmarred. An excited boy came in, and jabbered something to the Doctor. It appeared that there had been a riot or a strike or something equally lugubrious at the mines. One report said twelve men had been killed, another only four, with a score badly injured. It appeared certain that the superintendent had been assassinated, as well as a particularly unpopular foreman.

"We expected that," Sykes mildly observed, when the news of the foreman's death filtered in, between songs. It seems that he was a gun man, who intimidated his men.

Altogether, it was quite a party before we finished the evening. One hundred soldiers and twenty-five police had been sent up to aid the handful of Americans, who might have a couple of thousand labourers on their hands, most of them

armed with revolvers as well as machetes. Dolloring confided to me that he did n't particularly mind the gun fighting, but that when it came to knife mix-ups he preferred to be among those absent.

"They 're awfully dirty in a scrap," he said. "Did you ever notice how many of the people round here have scars?"

Of course it was after pay day that the circus started. Dolloring said he had never seen a fight in Costa Rica when the participants were sober, and one can get drunk only when one has the price, hence the close connection between pay days and riots.

CHAPTER III

The Land of Beautiful Views



THE Ferrocarril al Pacifico is the railroad that connects Puntarenas with the highland capital, San José. Its name is by far its most pretentious feature, and, apparently, its schedule is fashioned upon the leisurely example of the Pacific Mail. With the P. M., however, there seems room for argument as to which is cause and which is effect: whether the *mañana* tendencies of the steamers are a result of those of the territory and the people they serve, or *vice versa*.

Be that as it may, the daily train of the Ferrocarril al Pacifico takes seven hours to cover sixty-nine miles, and it may be remarked that those miles are "covered" in the fullest sense of the word, not to mention the traveller, the latter's person with an all-pervading dust, and his eyes with cinders from the wood-burning locomotives.

The fare from the coast to the capital is \$2.80,

gold. "Gold," by the way, signifies anything but native money, the "spiggoty" currency always being referred to as "silver," though the greater bulk of it handled by the traveller is in the form of filthy and usually very dilapidated paper notes. At the time of our visit the prevailing rate of exchange was slightly more than two to one, two Costa Rican equalling one American dollar.

For several miles the road follows close to the beach. Costa Rica's strand is not of the "white silvery" variety of popular song fame, for instead the entire lower Pacific coastline's sand has a decidedly black hue. However, the dazzling white surf more than atones for the sombreness of the sand, while the radiant, ethereal opalescence of the sky, and the softly shimmering surface of the sea itself, gradually merging westward into a misty morning horizon, framed close at hand by the palms and tree growth of the shore, made a picture rich enough in colour to delight the most ardent eye, and infinitely dreamlike and reposeful. That is the trick of the tropics. Nowhere else do such placid effects go hand in hand with vivid contrasts.

Along the tracks, before they leave the long sand-



A more capable institution than a cactus fence it would be difficult to contrive



Typical of the southland. Taboga Island, Bay of Panama

spit on the end of which is Puntarenas, are scores of huts and houses nestling in a wealth of foliage, with fruit trees and prospering gardens. The latter are admirably and uniquely fenced with cactus, whose thorn-clad leaves grow close together in straight rows as they are planted, forming a wall impenetrable to man or beast, often a dozen feet in height. A more capable institution than a cactus fence it would be difficult to contrive. However, the flaming brilliancy of an occasional poinsettia, and the calla lily-like beauty of a nameless white shrub do much to offset the sombre appearance of the fences.

Soon the road leaves the low sandspit, winds out along the base of rocky cliffs that drop sheer into the ocean, and then bears inland, starting its 2500-foot climb toward San José. Several long tunnels are traversed. On the up journey the passage was made without mishap, although the bulging of the supporting timbers and the evidences of past and promised future slides of the soft red clay were anything but encouraging. On returning, two weeks later, all passengers were obliged to leave the cars and walk through the dripping, sagging tunnels on foot, it being deemed

wiser to risk the loss of the train equipment than that of the human herd aboard. The day following our walk through the longest tunnel, a portion of it collapsed, fortunately before the train had reached it.

"Why are n't they fixed—rebuilt?" I asked an English-speaking native. "Some day they will be," was the characteristic reply. Why spend money fixing them until they become useless, was the burden of the logic brought to bear upon the problem. The entire road, it appeared, had been completed less than a year. While little definite information was obtainable, there seemed excellent reason to believe that the contractors who constructed it had reaped a golden harvest, being paid chiefly for what they did not do, while the government and the people were gradually awakening to the fact that they had footed the bills for a first class railroad and had been presented with a fourth class one.

However, in contrast with the alleged waggon roads of the country, occasionally visible through the trees and lowland jungles, the Ferrocarril al Pacifico was a paragon of efficiency. These waggon roads were for the most part nothing more than



“Instances abound of the destructive combination—hills, rain, and clay on the railroad
from San José to Limon ”

sloughs. Indeed, enterprising, prosperous, stable little Costa Rica has anything but a proud record as a road builder. It is said, and with good reason, that the longest distance a carriage can go from San José is less than ten miles. Then roads, or pretence of roads, cease. There is some excuse for the deplorable condition in the fact that the soil is ill adapted to road construction; the clay in most districts is naturally boggy, washes and slides readily, and is difficult to work. Also, Costa Rica is a land of hills, and likewise a land of violent rains. Instances abound of the destructive combination—hills, rain, and clay—on the eastern railroad from San José to Limon, the Atlantic port, upon which hundreds of thousands of dollars are spent repairing washouts. That road, it should be remarked, is the property of American capital; whence the fact that it is kept in repair.

It is a matter of historical record that San José was without railroad connection with the two oceans for many years after a great need for rail communication existed, for no other reason than that the people refused to allow the construction of an enterprise which would destroy the profitable waggon freighting business conducted from the

ports to the capital. In those days—decades ago—practically all of San José's export and import business was done through Puntarenas. San Francisco saw much of the wealthy Costa Ricans, and the Pacific Mail was the transportation key of Central America. Then appeared the United Fruit Company on the east; Limon became an important port, the Atlantic railroad was established, and on the west, the Panama railroad slumped as a transportation factor, the Pacific Mail became an occasional convenience instead of a necessity, and little Puntarenas waned. The new railroad doubtless will do something for the Pacific port, and the Canal may help it. But never again will it be the chief gateway to Costa Rica, as it was from the time of the early Spanish conquests long past the period of Panama's trade supremacy and the era of our own western trans-isthmian emigration.

Costa Rica, as above noted, opposed the construction of railroads. Small wonder, too, because the little republic is essentially a land of horses. Better a "land of saddle-bags"; I see that phrase scratched haphazard on the page of a note-book—a page smudged with one of those disconcerting

cinders from the wood-burning locomotive, with which we were deluged during the long climb that stifling December morning.

Truly a land of saddle-bags! If I were commissioned to create a national coat-of-arms for Costa Rica, without hesitation the choice would be saddle-bags rampant against an emerald hill—with mud in the foreground! Every one rides. Some of the horses are splendid, and all are competent beasts. In no city of its size in the world have I seen so many really good horses or so many well cared for, and in contrast to the diminutive beasts of Panama City, the Costa Rican horses are colossal. At a station the *ranchero* rides in, leaves his horse with a *mozo*, perhaps to be taken back to his *finca*, or perhaps to await his return from the city, and then, with his saddle-bags under his arm, he takes his place in the car. Those saddle-bags contain his wardrobe, perhaps for a week; also a meal or two, and if he is a poor man, Heaven knows what else—mayhap a hen, small dog, or fruit.

The men of the upper classes who move about the country dress much as men do in our West; all wear leggings and soft hats, most of them spurs;

bright scarfs are popular. In all probability a larger proportion of men go armed in Costa Rica than any where else and yet Costa Rica is by far the most peaceable, both in its political and individual social make-up, of any of the Central American Republics. An American will tell you that a Costa Rican cannot shoot. "But look out for them with a machete," is a warning to heed when the peons are on trouble bent.

Primarily, Costa Rica is isolated. This is even more true socially than it has been politically, and geographically. In a great measure, the territory was overlooked by the *conquistadores* who swept over the rest of Central America. Wherever they established themselves, these Spaniards seized vast tracts of land, placed in operation the peonage system, and left for all time the stamp of their own characteristics, and those of their less worthy followers, upon the land. To-day the great brunt of the Costa Rican population is purely Caucasian. In the lowlands there are negroes, chiefly on the Atlantic coast, in the banana districts, to which they have been imported from Jamaica and elsewhere. The "400" of the republic is almost a solid social mass. It is said

that half a hundred leading families, all more or less blood relatives, exclusively control state affairs, and, of course, elections.

In the cool plains of their delightful highlands the Costa Ricans have prospered, and to-day are the happiest of the Central Americans. They have had little need to meddle in the affairs of their neighbours, and on the rare occasions when neighbours have attempted the meddling, the latter have had excellent opportunity to regret their bad taste. For while the history of the little land is one of comparative peace, its ability to care for itself in time of need has been amply demonstrated more than once. It was the compact Costa Rican army that put an end to William Walker's expeditioning in Nicaragua, for instance.

Since 1842, Costa Rica has been independent, and since then has suffered no serious internal disturbance and no external difficulties at all. Her population is something less than half a million, though absolute accuracy as regards the latter is next to impossible; while the official statistics of Costa Rica are far more trustworthy and complete than those of any of its neighbours,

excepting perhaps Salvador, even they are far from being entirely dependable.

Costa Ricans are essentially a happy people, and their land a land of smiles, compared with the national melancholy that for the most part pervades the other countries—again excepting little Salvador. There is no land tax. The result is that every one owns a few acres, and as the productivity of the soil is marvellous beyond words, and the physical needs of the inhabitants simplicity itself, the inevitable outcome is a measure of universal satisfaction.

But to return to the railroad journey.

After hours of laborious scrambling up heavy winding grades, including a switchback or two, and the negotiation of several abysmal gorges over tight-rope-like steel bridges (one of the bridges that cross the Rio Grande, is 318 feet above the little yellow river, and affords an understanding of the difficulties of cross-country travel), we gradually emerged in the open reaches of the uplands. Below, the air had been furnace-like; magnificent forests, with flowers and vines and a wealth of foliage crowded the hillsides that hemmed us in. Now, toward noon (we had left Puntarenas

at nine o'clock) the air became cooler and bracing, the forests were left behind, and in their place appeared rolling reaches of fields and meadows, interspersed with innumerable hills. At first these latter completely shut out extensive views, but later, as the plateau lands were reached, inspiring vistas opened up on either hand. Near by were emerald *sabanas*, broad grassy fields, checkered with cattle; here and there and everywhere were tiny huts and houses, mostly made of mud or adobe walls and thatched with palm leaves and other native plant products. In the distance, to right and left, rose round-domed hills and sharper pinnacles, all green clad and covered with fields far up their sides. The altitude of none, I suppose, was in excess of six or seven thousand feet, but their effect, with the good cool air to boot, was delightfully exhilarating after weeks in torrid Panama and the lowland coast regions.

Everywhere there were evidences of intensive, if crude, cultivation. In the mid-regions, for instance, where the altitude favoured its production, we saw hundreds of rice fields, and the men and women in them threshing out the crop, which was accomplished in the most primitive way imaginable.

A small frame, or table, is placed conveniently in the field, and around it, on three sides, a wind-shield of burlap or similar material is rigged up. Then the workers bring sheaves of the cut grain, which are laid on the table while a man with a crude cudgel beats them, shaking the rice from the stalks, to be gathered up. While we had no opportunity to make close examination of one of these contrivances, it is safe to say that in a day's work an active man would flail out but a bushel or two of rice, and that only with a generous expenditure of "elbow grease." However, rice has been harvested that way since their fathers' fathers came to Costa Rica, and no doubt will continue so to be long after the present generation is forgotten.

At Oritina, about midway between the sea and the capital, we had three-quarters of an hour for dinner. A swarm of very old women and very young children besieged the cars, offering at the windows a display of delicacies and indelicacies which was remarkable. There were *tortillas*, a soggy pancake affair, made as Providence directed and cooked accordingly on a hot surface; *tortillas* are the staff of life to your Central American.



A Tehuantepec woman making tortillas.
"A tortilla is a soggy pancake affair"

Queso de mantequilla, a soft cream cheese, was peddled in convenient slabs of doubtful cleanliness. There were hardy omelettes, called, I believe, *tortillas compuestas*; and sweets, meats, and a horde of unknown little gastronomic offerings, including fruits of many kinds, from the world-known banana, orange, and pineapple to less familiar fruits, which later experience taught us were *papya*, *anona*, *pixbæ*, *zapote*, *granddilla pequena* and others less readily identified; among them may be mentioned an affair that resembles a darning egg, and is full of a custard-like sweet substance, generously interspersed with black seeds. A *zapote* looks much like a russet apple, and contains sweet meat of a terra-cotta colour. However, the *pixbæ*, which is really a small nut, gives one's tasting organs the strangest sensation of all; the easiest way to describe the *pixbæ* is to say that its meat resembles a peculiar combination of sweet potato and chestnut, if such a union can be imagined. This, by the way, in the exterior of a yellow tomato, is to say the least, a bit of a surprise!

While the second-class passengers shrilly bargained for their lunch purchases with the vendors, we made our way to an eating-place beside the

track, under the guidance of a Spanish-speaking American engineer. The theory that it is difficult, and even dangerous, to travel through Latin America unless one speaks Spanish is a foolish fallacy. Without Spanish, of course, one misses much that is worth having, suffers some inconveniences and worries, and probably gets "stuck" a few more times than is strictly necessary. However, the point in this instance is that invariably when an interpreter is wanted the right man providentially turns up. The Spaniards themselves are polite and obliging beyond words; also, many of them speak English excellently; and lastly, Americans seem to be scattered in every nook and corner of the country.

The dinner chiefly consisted of rice and frijoles, or beans; to be happy in the southland one must be an enthusiastic admirer of these two fundamentals of Central American diet. Beans, rice, and *tortillas* are about all a native epicure desires. Remove the rice from the menu, and you have the fare of the poor, 365 days a year.

Our guide was an American engineer, who was returning to his charge, the construction of a power plant that is tucked away on a remote mountain

stream, ultimately to be harnessed in connection with the development of gold mines in the north-western districts. He told us much of the life of the haphazard Americans who filter here and there through the tropics, and later proved a courteous guide in San José.

At Athenas, which resembled Athens not at all, there was another recess from travel, of which the hungry availed themselves in consuming a second catch-as-catch-can luncheon. I recall that greasy bits of fried chicken figured extensively in the Athenas bill of fare, and I admit that it was most excellent chicken, too.

At the stations and on the train a shifting kaleidoscope of native types opened before us, most of them drawn from the lowlier walks of life. The women are of medium height, brown skinned, dark eyed, quiet, and seldom beautiful, for the bloom of the Spanish girl seems to wear off quickly. But the smiles (even an inexperienced Gringo can provoke them!) are worth their price, whatever it be, for Spanish lips are notably red, and beneath them are universally pretty and snowy white teeth. The real Costa Ricans dress chiefly in black, though the Indian women revel in gaudy colours,

but to a far less degree than do their sisters in Guatemala; their adornments are brighter, perhaps, than those of the country women of Italy, but less varied, and their effect far less artistic than that of any Neapolitan street crowd. But on the whole, of course, the human scenery is reminiscent of Italy and of Spain. Hats there are none, but everywhere shawls; oftentimes the raggedest barefoot hag, with a faded cotton skirt, will wear the most exquisite silk shawl.

In all Costa Rica we saw not a single boy with short trousers. Account for it? Not I! The only plausible explanation is that the youngsters are adorned at birth with the discarded long trousers of their paternal parents, tucked up to meet requirements. Later, the tucks are unreefed as occasion demands.

The carts of Costa Rica are unique, and typical of the transportation of all Central America. Their two wheels are made of solid blocks of wood, with a tire width of perhaps eight inches; the frames are massive, and the "pole" is in itself a goodly beam, bringing the total weight of the cart up to a figure that would dishearten any horse. However, oxen supply the motive power, great



Unloading coffee.
"The carts of Costa Rica are unique"

lumbering, thick shouldered beasts, with an appearance of abject ill temper and a reality of subdued docility. Their only harness is the clumsy wooden yoke joining the necks of the "team," for they almost invariably go two and two, bearing the weight of the pole and pulling the incredible loads entirely with this neck yoke.

The big beasts hang their heads close to the ground, plodding after their driver who guides them with a long light stick, one end of which he rests on the yoke, as he marches before them, a sort of pilot. A grunted order to "port," "star-board," or "stop" is obeyed with surprising intelligence. From babyhood the bullocks are joined together with a yoke, which they carry to their graves, so that long before they take to the broad highway and the task of earning their daily bread and butter (or whatever a normal ox relishes) each member of a team has become accustomed to the idiosyncrasies of the other. Whether or not the process is mutually satisfactory, it must be admitted that never was a more comprehensive double life enacted. It assuredly is a case, in the *nth* degree, of "two souls with but a single thought, two hearts that beat as one."

Near Athenas, where we first saw the national ox cart in all its glory, an attempted robbery had resulted comically, but a month or so before. A pack-train of burros en route from near-by mines to the railroad, all heavily loaded with bullion, had been intercepted by highwaymen, and their guards either killed or scattered. Also, sad to relate, the burros scattered, and so effectively that they and their precious burdens, like the play villain after the *dénouement*, were "never again seen or heard of." At least they did n't show up for several days, when they placidly put in an appearance at the mines, the gold still upon them. Which, it will be admitted, was hard on the enterprising highwaymen, and proves that a burro in the hand is worth two in the bush.

From an agricultural standpoint this first section of our initial Central American transcontinental trip gave us a splendid key to the zones of production of the various staples. It was much as if we cut a cross-section of the big isthmus, for comfortable examination.

Roughly speaking, the topographical conformation of all Central America is identical. The Cordilleras, backbone of the continental divide,

wind north and south through the mid regions, at various distances from the two oceans. The productive hinterland is composed of plateaus and valleys. On the two flanks of the continental ridge are hardwood forests and agricultural areas. Below lie the coastal plains. The lowest zone, that of the coast regions, is banana land; also, there are hardwood forests, and, in the foot-hills, mineral riches. Then, as altitude is gained, comes the coffee belt, the region of beautiful *fincas*, with their incredibly natty orchards of red-berried trees; oranges and all other fruit flourish in this strata, but from a commercial view-point coffee is king, a far more important monarch in Salvador and Guatemala than in Costa Rica, where its production is of less commanding importance. Above, on the plateaus, is cattle land, and coffee too, for many tons of the finest beans are raised in the highest altitudes. Banana-raising is the industrial standby of Costa Rica, and when we later continued our ocean-to-ocean journey, and dipped down into the hot swamps of the Atlantic lowlands, we saw the workings of the great banana industry at its best; of that anon.

That transcontinental journey was a rare lesson

in geography. Among other things it taught us that there is as much diversity of climate in Central America as the most fastidious might desire. Believe no one who tells you that you "suffocate from heat" in Costa Rica, for its heights offer the most delightful wintering climate imaginable. Indeed, when once travellers' accommodations are provided, North America has at its door an ideal pleasure place for winter excursions, and one in no way excelled—climatically, scenically, or historically—by anything that much-travelled Europe has to offer.

Late in the afternoon the final climb was accomplished and we jolted along the open prairies of the plateau which holds the capital city, and which, perhaps a dozen miles in width, extends east and west, finally funnelling to a narrower pass near the summit of the continental divide, where just to the westward lies San José. On the last stretch of that journey we realised more than ever the aptness of the title often given to Costa Rica—"The Land of Beautiful Views." Truly, the highland scenery was lovely, the countryside curiously resembling the Massachusetts Berkshires. (I had almost said the highlands of Sweden, had not the comparison



Coffee-drying *patios* on the outskirts of San José de Costa Rica

of Northern Europe with our own tropics seemed too far fetched—which, in reality, in this instance it is not.) The rolling meadows were dotted with boulders, here and there abrupt little valleys nosed into the rounded hills, while the fields and fences made of it all a pastoral checker-board of greens and browns, over which random shadows raced now and again as the fluffy white clouds scampered pell-mell across the bluest of blue evening skies, chased by the uncertain breezes that seemed to meet hereabout midway between the two oceans.

Forthwith we were in San José, whence a speedy drive took us to the Hotel Imperial. Our room there—telegraphed for ahead—was one of decayed elegance, its most notable characteristic being that it contained the worst bed in the world. The mattress, I am convinced, was stuffed with sand. Concerning the pillows, this mournful note-book entry tells the story: "They are a cross between cold buckwheat cakes and a dress-suit case."

"Often the hotel proprietor will call your attention to the freshness of the linen, *if it happens to be fresh*," was advice I had once received, prelimin-

ary to a wrestle with Russian hotels. If nothing was said—well, the least said the better!

In Central America one may go farther. Put it this way: If the linen shows indications of previous use, mine host may remark reassuringly that the former occupant was a *white* person. That is comfort enough for any one.

And again, if no reassuring remark is forthcoming, the least said the better—only more so!

In the course of our investigations we encountered sundry large and agile spiders parading about the walls like mourners at a funeral. We innocently ventured objection.

"They are quite harmless, and destroy bugs," we were reassured.

Perhaps they do. Our particular spiders, however, were disappointments. At least, if their mission was to destroy other members of the insect kingdom, after a night in that bed we bore conclusive evidence that the efficiency in this direction of these particular room-mates was below par.

When we retired, four large automobiles lined the curb below the balcony of our window. In the morning the autos had vanished, and in their stead was a group of the solid-wheeled ox carts,

such as doubtless were pressed into service by the Spanish conquerors three centuries since. As we slept, the pages of transportation history had turned back from the twentieth century to mediævalism—and we were in Central America!

CHAPTER IV

Costa Rica's Capital



OSTA RICA'S capital is a gay little city of surprising contrasts and contradictions. For instance, Costa Rica is, economically, far more Americanized than any of its neighbours, and yet San José is anything but American in appearance and manners. On a very miniature scale it is Parisian. At all events, the streets, the stores, and the people show a European stamp that is unmistakable.

"And why not?" said Señor Domento, to whom we bore introductions. "Europe is our playground. All of us who can afford it, and many who cannot, spend our holidays there. We know Paris far better than we know New York. To be sure, of late there is more travel to your country, thanks to the steamer service of the United Fruit Company, but even it is negligible. We are ignorant of North America."

He showed me the San José newspapers, which are well above the standard of Latin land journalism. They have typesetting machines, adequate plants, and elaborate quarters—editorial offices, indeed, so superbly sumptuous that a Yankee reporter, accustomed to shirt-sleeves, deal tables, and cigar stumps, would wonder if he had not blundered into the realms of royalty, should he suddenly be transported into the leisurely “city room” of *La Informacion* with portraits of celebrities on the frescoed walls, mahogany trimmings, and gilded decorations *ad infinitum*.

I say the newspapers are creditable. Yet their cable news, most of it, exclusively concerns European affairs. There is a smattering of Central American items. What purports to originate in the United States is chiefly of the most sensational character, and that grossly exaggerated. Truly, I believe an honest seeker after light, should his sole means of information be the Central American papers, would emerge from the journalistic encounter with the fixed belief that the United States is a land of lynchings, border battles, trust baiting, and political jockeyings that would pale

to insignificance the most rabid efforts of professional tropical revolutionists.

Why this? The answer is easy. Newspapers the world over are apt to give their readers what their readers want. Central Americans are interested in Europe. They want European news. They have preconceived notions regarding conditions in the United States; their prejudices, not unnaturally, are fed. It is all too bad, but quite unavoidable. Americans who may be disposed to censure such an attitude and such ignorance would do well to remember that ninety per cent. of the news our own papers print regarding Central America is pure balderdash, or has been up to perhaps two years ago. Our public knows nothing about southern affairs. Our notions, hitherto fed by Sunday special writers, fiction published as such, and other fiction published as fact, are sadly awry. But more on that head later. Suffice to add that the opening of the Canal and the increasing effort on our part to get acquainted with the little brother countries south of Mexico will bring about a natural, if somewhat slow, cure.

A word regarding the treatment of local news is opportune here. Costa Rica is supposed to have

a free press, and there is, I believe, no official censorship. Yet there is in the Costa Rican papers very little anti-administration news, and practically no editorial criticism of governmental procedure. I know of no instances of direct persecution (they abound in the other lands), yet there is a decided lack of candour in press expression upon public affairs. Perhaps it is as well. The country is prosperous. Elections are held; to be sure, the candidates are placed before the "common peepul" by a social—or moneyed—ring, and there is no opposition worthy of the name to the preordained winner. But the press freedom of Costa Rica—and Salvador—far and away leads that of the other republics. In fact, there is none elsewhere. Editors either say what the powers that be desire to have said, or say nothing at all—facing an alternative the least disagreeable of whose consequences is financial ruin.

A further comment upon Central American journalism may be ventured. Judging from the evident expense of conducting them (even where typesetters receive only seventy cents a day!) and the apparent limitation of their legitimate revenues, the supposition seems justifiable that

in most cases the papers are supported by one interest or another, and are sustained as useful mouthpieces. The opinion is but a supposition, and nothing more.

So San José is European, and wealthy Costa Ricans go to Paris and the Riviera for their fun. One result is that mortgages, most of them held by Germans, abound on the *fincas* and *haciendas*, for Germany first entered the field and retains the lion's share of Central American loans and trade. Aside from the great fruit company, the interests of our own capitalists are almost exclusively centred in mining and railroad properties.

San José has a population of about 40,000. The streets are paved and scrupulously clean. Nearly all the buildings are of one story, chiefly built of stone blocks or adobe, with plastered walls, which are tinted a score of hues, all delicate and adding to the bright attractiveness of the airy little town. Pinks, browns, delicate blues and greens abound; with the background of the verdant hills, and the vivacious *couleur locale* furnished by the gay shawled women and well-groomed men, with the picturesque and ever-present primitive touch added by

the antediluvian ox carts, San José's vistas are a source of never-ending delight.

Sidewalks are absurdly narrow, many not more than eighteen inches wide. Just why, unless they were planned with an eye to strict (and unlikely) propriety, it is hard to say. To add to the difficulty of dual enjoyment of their privileges is the fact that they are some two feet above the street level, and usually have a goodly stream of water racing beside them in the abysmal gutters. These gutters, with their living streams, are for the most part the city's sewers. So an outing on a San José sidewalk with one's lady resolves itself into something of an acrobatic performance, especially if there is any traffic in the opposite direction; one must be prepared to abandon the precarious walk on a second's notice and leap lightly—gracefully, if possible—across the flooded gutter down upon the street, and back again, when chance offers.

The men of the richer class are remarkable for their elegance. In no small city have I ever seen so many nattily dressed gentlemen. Some are Americans, some German; a few may be travelling men, but for the most part they are the native

gentlemen. "Top" hats are no novelty. White vests, Prince Alberts, spats, and patent leather shoes are as much *en evidence* as they would be on any Parisian boulevard. Doubtless one reason for the universal "well dressedness" is the low price of tailor-made clothing, which averages about half of our home prices. And, of course, manners are as elegant as apparel, but that is no peculiarity of San José alone, for Spanish manners are perfection in any setting. There, indeed, lies one reason why Americans, and particularly Yankee salesmen, prosper so illy in the Republics. American manners, as a whole, are abominable; at least, they certainly are when judged by Latin standards. In Latin land it is quite customary to take one's hat entirely off when being introduced to the chancest passer-by on the street. One always shakes hands at the slightest provocation. Floweriness of speech, compliments, and a fundamental graciousness (it is inherent and not at all conscious or assumed) are social essentials. How many Yankee drummers would come out unscathed, under such competition, do you suppose?

"It gets on my nerves, all this foolishness," said a hustling Chicago drummer. He was try-



A contrast in San José—modern lighting and archaic transportation



The principal street of Costa Rica's capital

ing to sell canned goods. "Why in h— don't they cut it out and get down to business?"

The answer to such a query is written large in the store windows of San José and other Central American towns: They are full of European goods. The German, the Britisher, and the suave Frenchman have been studying selling conditions for a generation. They have trained men in the field, who can be as polite, as gracious, and, if needs be, as supremely leisurely, as their native patrons. But our wholesalers are learning. Also, they are coming to understand the peculiar demands of the tropical trade as regards the packing of goods, and that their competitors on the other side of the Atlantic cater to the slow-but-sure pay methods of Central and South America. Thousands of North American orders have been lost because the quick thinking, quick acting north-erners have insisted on sixty-day payment, when your southerner considers anything less than six months nearly the equivalent of "cash," and has no hesitation in expecting a year within which to pay for his purchases.

Of the upper class women one sees little, except, perchance, when they drive slowly about the plaza

in their victorias during a band concert, or appear at social functions. But they spend the great majority of their Costa Rican days in privacy, probably reserving themselves for the mad swing of the annual European vacation time.

The social barometer of the feminine rank and file is the shawl. The lowest strata cover their heads with shawls of black cashmere. Then come embroidered cotton scarfs, next silk scarfs, and finally, most beautiful and expensive of all, are the exquisitely embroidered silk shawls, of many shades and with elaborate fringes, that adorn the brunette heads of the well-to-do and give to the streets their brightest touch of colour. A favourite and exquisite tint is coffee, and surely none could be more appropriate in this land of the coffee bean. The middle-class women, and the poor, wear their hair in two braids, with debonair bows at the ends. Thin faces seem rare among the native women; the characteristic face is full, with extremely broad jowls and rounded cheeks. These latter, however, are not left as nature made them, for although their ruddy colouring seems to require no embellishment, painting is very popular. Even girls in their teens practise the habit and

practise it lavishly, while the facial make-up of the older women is often so vivid as to be laughable.

There are many, many cripples. Perhaps they are particularly apparent because of the narrow streets and sidewalks, and especially inasmuch as their sorrowful deformities stand out in such contrast to the sunny gaiety of their surroundings.

San José is unique in that it is a night-time as well as a day-time city. Use of the streets of most Central American cities practically ceases at dark, but not so with San José, for its well-lighted sidewalks and plazas are thronged during the cool evenings. Another metropolitan characteristic is the electric street-car line, of modest proportions, to be sure, but the only one between Mexico and Panama.

The Costa Ricans are extravagant. Their land is prodigal, and so are they. An ever-present evidence of this in San José is the number of excellent and attractive stores. Prices are high, thanks to distance from European supply points and high duties, but if the coffee crop is good, who cares about a few *colones*, one way or the other? There are better things to eat and more costly things to wear in the shops of San José than in

those of any other Central American city; the per capita foreign trade of Costa Rica is five times that of any of its neighbours.

The supreme extravagance of the city and the republic is the *Teatro Nacional*. Think of an isolated town of 40,000 people with an opera-house that cost a million dollars!

Up to a few years ago dodging interest payment on her national debt, spending nothing for much needed roads and less for agricultural betterments, proud little Costa Rica yet lavished millions upon public buildings, of which the *Teatro Nacional* is the crown jewel.

Through the courtesy of Colonel Prestinary, secretary to President Jiminez, we were escorted through the beautiful theatre by a well-informed gentleman whose name is of no concern. We admired, sincerely, the magnificent marbles, the lavish mural decorations, the furnishings; we conceded it to be what it truly is, an architectural masterpiece, of, perhaps, a rather overdrawn and bizarre school.

"How could Costa Rica afford such an extravagance?" I asked. We had been talking of the recent defalcation in the payment of interest upon



A plaza of San José

the national debt, of the need of good roads, and the possibilities of agricultural betterment.

"Ah, you cold, practical Anglo-Saxons do not understand." The speaker was himself a practical man; educated in one of our colleges, he knows us. "We are Latins here. It is in the Spanish blood to love beauty and play—*la fiesta*. We had the money, and so—" here an all-explanatory shrug of the shoulders, "so, we built our theatre. And is it not truly beautiful? Is it not a thing for little Costa Rica to be proud of? Surely we are progressive."

True, this luxurious building stands a monument to its builder's progressiveness—or is it to the baffling inconsequentiality of Central Americanism?

Other Costa Ricans will shrug their shoulders quite differently than did our guide. I talked with Señor Don Cleyo Gonzalez Viquez, the ex-president, and, I believe, a prominent candidate for the presidency in 1914. He was proud of the "progressiveness," but, "Half the money would have given us a theatre amply good enough for San José," said he. "And think of the roads the other half million might have made." He reminded me that a carriage can progress safely

not more than half a dozen miles from the site of the *Teatro Nacional*.

Many of the educated Costa Ricans speak English. Nearly all are at home with French, and probably as many speak German, for Costa Rica is essentially cosmopolitan, while at the same time being fundamentally clannish. The land is well equipped with schools, having by all odds the best educational system of any of the republics. Guatemala makes a great boast of its school systems, but superficial investigation leaves the impression that it is principally "system" and very little real schooling. Costa Rica, on the other hand, has real schools, real pupils, and real teachers. One of its favourite boasts is that there are more teachers in the republic than soldiers. A unique feature of the high school course is that the third-year pupils are assigned as assistant teachers in the various ward schools in San José. There is no provision for university instruction. A normal school is encouraged by bounties to its scholars, offered by the government to encourage men and women to enter the unremunerative teachers' profession. One-eighth of the annual budget is devoted to educational work.

The Biblioteca Nacional, or public library, with about 50,000 volumes well housed, represents the literary side of life better than might be expected in an isolated land of 350,000 inhabitants. To be sure, the dust that covers many shelves perhaps indicates a livelier national interest in music and the drama than in literature. Mark Twain was well represented, and Señor Ferroz, the aged librarian, told us that Dickens, whose works we found in Spanish and French as well as English, was by all odds the "best seller" to-day.

Important among the other public institutions is the insane asylum, situated on the outskirts of the city. It has the distinction of being supported by the national lottery, from which it derives a monthly revenue of 18,000 *colones*, or about \$9000.

The lottery, with monthly drawings, sells 100,000 *colones* worth of tickets. In the words of an observant American, it is "absolutely straight," something of a distinction, as lotteries go. In Panama the lottery is extremely noticeable; one sees ticket sellers everywhere, and the regular Sunday drawings—held in the Bishop's Palace, by the way—attract eager crowds. In San José one

sees no ticket sellers, and but few tickets which are displayed in stores. Another difference in the two countries is that in Panama the immensely profitable gambling institution is conducted by a private individual, under lease from the government, while Costa Rica operates its own lottery, and devotes the proceeds to the support of an admirable public institution.

In the national park near the railroad station you can find comfortably shaded seats. I word it thus because the seats themselves, geographically, so to speak, are not comfortable, but the shade is. And sitting there, you look upon the statue group which commemorates the expulsion from Costa Rica of William Walker and his "army" of adventurers. The work bears the inscription "Batalla de Santa Anna, May 20, 1866." The group represents a handful of bronze patriots rising in their wrath, while before them the filibustering American flees in terror and defeat. From a standpoint of sculpture the statue has merit, and regarded as a memento of an historical incident that is quite unique, it commands attention.

One afternoon I met President Don Ricardo Jiminez, having borne an introduction to him from

Washington, and a more personal one from Dr. Belisario Porras, who became President of Panama in October, 1912.

It was in the drawing-room of the palace that we met. I entered a vestibule, passed a soldier or two; there was no pomp or difficulty. Secretary Colonel Prestinary greeted me—a tall, polished gentleman, half German, wholly courteous, faultlessly clad in military uniform. He regarded my credentials, and left me while he presented the introductions to His Excellency.

The room was typical of nothing at all. It was over-furnished. Red plush and gilt chairs and sofas, of the Louis XIV. style, precise and comfortless; rich red wall paper, formal paintings, gilt framed and some of them good; a portrait of a president or two, the inevitable glass candelabra, and deep windows, shuttered against the afternoon sun, opening direct upon the sidewalk, through the medium of stout bars.

During the brief minutes I waited, I recalled meeting, a few weeks earlier, with Don Pablo Arosemena, President of Panama. There had been a deal more of pomp; many soldiers, some formalities, and ultimately something akin to dis-

appointment, for when I met the worthy President upstairs in the national palace, I found him in shirt sleeves and collarless, loafing on a balcony, and altogether appearing extremely unpresidential.

Ricardo Jiminez looks and talks as if he would make an excellent school teacher. He was well dressed, wearing a conventional frock coat. A man of fifty or thereabout, with brown eyes that occasionally light up with enthusiasm or quiet humour, rather serious, of medium height, straight, low voiced, he is every inch a gentlemen. His conversation and his manners are polished to that point which is agreeable without being boresome.

After the formalities of introduction, he seated himself beside me on a sofa, incidentally apologising for his poor English and then speaking most excellently.

"Well, what sort of a report will you make of poor little Costa Rica?" he asked, with a half smile.

I enthused. It was genuine enthusiasm. That opened the way for a brief, and apparently frank, discussion of affairs. One of his first complaints was that his country had so often been maligned by writers. He was bitter in his denunciation of

ill-informed visitors who publish erroneous reports concerning things as they are not.

"What do you Americans like to read, anyway?" was one of President Jiminez's queries.

He was curious to know why so much misinformation was printed and accepted regarding Central America. He resented the fact that the average American had no idea that Costa Rica is a stable, law-abiding country. He spoke with pride of the import and export statistics, comparing them with those of Guatemala and Nicaragua, both far larger and far poorer lands. We talked of the problem of raising funds without a land tax. To-day more than half the country's income is derived from the liquor monopoly, and the administration finds itself in the somewhat embarrassing position of favoring strict steps for the advancement of prohibition while at the same time such a course must very seriously impair its income.

"Yes, much of our freedom from revolutions during the last half century is due to the fact that land is untaxed, for without taxation there is great encouragement toward owning a little land, and as every one is a property owner no one wants

to see existing conditions upset, for fear of losing what they already have. In some of the other countries it has been very different. There the poor people have owned absolutely nothing; they have had nothing to lose and perhaps much to gain by revolution. At least, the hope of possible gain was well drilled into them by their leaders. And then there is the excitement. Life is dull in the bankrupt countries, and one must have diversion."

Evidently President Jiminez is a close student of the affairs of the world, and certainly is well read regarding modern political and economic developments. And coupled with his rather scholarly attainments there seems to be a strong strain of practicality, and, if the evidences of a brief conversation are worth considering, of what a Yankee would call "backbone." Altogether, one is inclined to congratulate Costa Rica upon its chief executive.

Later, Colonel Prestinary escorted me through the penitentiary and the barracks. The former is a large stone building on a hill near the town, whose walls were badly shattered by the earthquake of 1910 that destroyed Cartago. One feature of



" More characteristic of Guatemala than of Costa Rica. The stocks in rural Costa Rica "

the establishment is a lesson in national health precaution. Prostitution is licensed and women are medically examined throughout the country, those who require attention being shipped to the capital and locked in a department of the penitentiary, where they remain under medical treatment until recovery. At the time of my visit there were 145 men and 43 women in the penitentiary, about half of them for minor crimes, as the building is also a municipal jail for San José. Long term inmates are sent to an island near Puntarenas, whence little seems to leave but the guitars the prisoners make, beautiful instruments that are sold for a song.

There are two chief barracks in the city, both of which we visited. Militarism is a minor consideration in Costa Rica. The total enrolment of the army is but 170 privates and 70 officers! The soldiers seem to be drawn principally from among the Indian boys; on a guess, I should say the average age of the recruits is less than eighteen years. Most of them are barefoot, and all uniformed in blue jeans and cotton coats, with red stripes on caps and sleeves, to lend a touch of military colour. In the simple manœuvres and

drills we saw, the boys handled themselves very fairly. Whether they can shoot I don't know. Their officers say they have ample marksmanship practice, but with the economy of military expenditure it seems doubtful if much ammunition is used.

In the storehouses and arsenals there is a surprising lot of reserve equipment. For instance, in one building I chanced into, there were tucked away two modern Krupp batteries, each of six guns, three similar batteries of German make, a couple of Escoda four-gun batteries, twenty Maxims, and eight Colt rapid-fire guns. All artillery is limited to light pieces, for mountain transportation, and to rapid-firers, designed for street fracas. The greatest surprise of all, however, was the discovery of 10,000 1910 model Mausers, a similar number of older Mausers, and 5000 excellent Remingtons.

"Oh, they might come in handy some day—in Nicaragua, for instance," said the Colonel.

Costa Rica entertains a very lively dislike for its northern neighbour. It will never result in offensive action, however, but rather indicates that Costa Rica is ready—and quite willing—to

take care of itself should any one step on its tiny, but proud, national toes.

Military service is supposed to be compulsory for three months. However, it is doubtful if more than a very small percentage of Costa Rica's youth receive the ordained training. They have the officers—the skeleton—for a goodly army, and, as indicated above, the equipment.

"We can put 53,000 soldiers in the field in thirty days," was the boast of a grizzled *commandante*. Perhaps they can.

In addition to the manual of arms and regular drill work the boys have the benefits of well conducted barrack schools, where they receive instruction in rudimentary mathematics, geography, hygiene, and simple military field work. The youngsters are bright faced and smiling, for the most part. They seem to have a genuine pride in being "real soldiers," and instead of the brief military service being an arduous duty, to be escaped if possible, it appears to be quite popular. The honour of their job is the only pay the bare-foot heroes receive.

All of this orderly, happy—even kindly—militarism is quite different from what one encounters

in the other republics. Conditions in Honduras, for instance, are not badly illustrated by a popular story which relates that the reigning "president" desired to increase the enrolment of his standing army. He needed volunteers, and needed them badly. So he requested so many "volunteers" from a certain district, for immediate delivery. The *jefe politico*, or governor, forwarded the required number of patriots. Also, he sent the following message to headquarters: "Herewith find twenty volunteers. Please send back the ropes."

The budget for 1912 gives an idea of the financial side of the government. The total expenditure called for is 8,610,359 *colones*, or about half that many dollars. Of this 207,999 goes for "foreign relations," a sum nearly twice as great as the upkeep of the military system or of the schools. Many Costa Ricans recognise the absurdity of the little nation burdening itself with the host of representatives it maintains in foreign countries. The only essential diplomatic offices it actually needs are those in the neighbouring Central American republics, and, perhaps, at Washington. But, like that of its neighbours, Costa Rican pride

insists that its foreign relations be cared for with pomp and ceremony. Which costs money.

An instructive commentary upon things as they are in Costa Rica is contained in the appropriation for "Musicas Militares de la Republica." This item, which means the public and military bands, receives 203,539 *colones*, more than is devoted to the upkeep of prisons.

Music is the beginning and the end of social life and amusement for the rank and file. Every one gets an extraordinary amount of pleasure from the many concerts that are given at the open-air band-stands in the plazas of San José, and by the less pretentious and less accomplished bands in the smaller towns.

There is one substantial reason for all this music. It pleases and amuses the "peepul." It makes them happy. Incidentally, I suppose, it keeps them out of mischief. Under this head, it certainly is worth the hundred thousand dollars annually spent upon it.

It is an education, too, and a real delight. Think of every one having the privilege of hearing the best band and concert music. In fact, think of not being able to get away from hearing it!

A delightful sort of popular pastime, is n't it? The children are brought up on Grand Opera and lovely lilting Spanish tunes, vivacious and alluring beyond words when one listens of an evening under the star-crowded tropical sky, with flowers around the benches, picturesque palms and strange-leaved trees whispering in the breezes, and the human stream of pretty dark-eyed women and natty men filtering past, couples arm in arm, talking softly about those endless matters that couples discuss the world over, even without the accompaniment of such an utterly romantic environment. It all makes a Yankee sorry for the Northland folks at home. Our giggling Coney Island crowds appear infinitely brazen and ill-mannered in comparison—which they probably are. Rag-time tunes, murdered by rag-time players, seem an insult. All in all, an evening on the plaza—any Spanish town plaza—when the military band dashes into the vibrant strains of Wagner or gently wanders through the dreamful labyrinths of Puccini, is a first-class antidote for a superabundance of impatient Yankee get-up-and-get-ness. It is also the most charming experience in the world. Administer to the general New York

business public, for instance, regular potions of *dolce far niente* tropical life, properly compounded with Spanish music, starlit nights in flower-scented plazas, and, perhaps, just a suspicion of dark-eyed native beauty for the romantically inclined, and the result cannot be but beneficial. I'll warrant there would be fewer breakdowns, and that "nerve specialists" would howl for a "protective tariff" against such panaceas!

We North Americans have something to learn from our easy-going Southern neighbours. Or perhaps is it that we have something to un-learn?

CHAPTER V

Banana Land



O leave the invigorating uplands of San José and plunge down into the banana belt along the Atlantic is like abandoning the Alps for a Turkish bath. That sounds overdrawn, does n't it? It is n't.

There are parlour cars on the Limon road, and, if I remember aright, a ruinous rate for their use. But ruinous rates are justifiable on the one hundred miles of road that connect the capital with the Atlantic port, for the expense of maintaining the line at all is enormous. During the rainy season, from December to June, washouts are the order of the day. The curves and cuts are amazing. The ravages done to clay hillsides by the untameable *Toro Amarillo*, or Yellow Bull, river, is a thorn in the side of engineers. Even in the matter of ties, difficulties are encountered; most of those used now are of metal—wooden ties either insisted on

taking root and sending forth inconvenient shoots, or rotted away with depressing speed in the wet ground.

"Stick an umbrella in the ground over night and you 'll have an umbrella tree in the morning," was the way a fellow-traveller expressed the productivity of the soil. He did not exaggerate hopelessly, either, for all the fence posts grow, so that instead of modest fences one sees sprawling forests marking the division of fields.

The road is owned and operated by the American United Fruit Company. (Some people say the same thing about the entire country!) The conductor was from Pennsylvania, and seemed supremely bored with his duties. How he survives the daily transition from the 5000-foot heights to the sea-level muggy heat is a marvel. Perhaps his constitution is constructed on the plan of a chameleon's hide.

First the train climbs from San José to Cartago, the old capital. To-day the town is little more than a depressing succession of ruins, for on May 4, 1910, an earthquake laid its devastating hand upon the classic old place, and churches and homes came tumbling down upon the inhabitants,

amid scenes of undescrivable horror. Reports say that 1104 persons were killed. It was also the death-blow of Cartago, for there seems little probability that anything can resuscitate the physical demolishment and the human demoralisation. Once before, in 1841, the city was destroyed.

On the left of the tracks, northward, we saw the flanks and the lofty summit of the volcano Irazu, responsible for the catastrophe, a noble peak, 11,603 feet in height. Its summit is said to be one of the two places in the world whence one can see both the Atlantic and the Pacific. The other vantage point is the peak of Acatenango, in Guatemala, loftiest of all Central American mountains, from which I later saw the two oceans myself.

After passing for some miles through aristocratic and immaculate coffee *fincas*, the cultivation of the country became less and less noticeable, and its abrupt ragged wildness more and more apparent. Down, down, plunged the train, rounding innumerable hair-raising curves, hanging over perilous cliffs whence yellow-watered rivers were visible far below, rollicking along rocky beds seaward. Ever and anon there opened up a view

less restricted by overhanging hills and encroaching forests—surpassingly beautiful vistas of the tousled countryside, with hills and valleys, river gorges, forests, and occasional fields prodigally intermingled in the wildest, rarest scenes the eye could wish to feast upon. A land lavish of colour, too, as of topographical variety; there were greens beyond number in the forests, and all the gayest tints a rainbow ever dared disport on the flower-broidered, sun-soaked hillsides; there were browns and greys in the giant tree trunks, and brighter browns in the sloping clay banks; there were birds, gorgeously caparisoned, and men and women and beasts; and over all was the glorious blue sky, with infinitely white and fluffy cloudlets, the loafers of the tropical heavens, lazily shifting hither and thither at the beck of the orderly breezes.

Then come forest depths, swamps, and Banana Land. Finally, the road emerges from the lowlands and skirts the Atlantic, last seen by us at Colon, on the Isthmus.

Limon is a banana port. It has excellent wharves, the United Fruit Company offices, stores, and quarters, a handsome hospital on a breezy

point (also U. F. property), and a nondescript conglomeration of shacks, miserable stores, and a comfortless hotel or two. There is also a most beautiful little plaza place, darkly cool beneath a veritable forest of huge banyan trees; a concrete sea wall, with blue Caribbean water slapping against it and dingy crabs sidling along it, and, most notable of all, an unescapable air of concentrated, high-pressure activity. Limon, you see, is American; and the Americans there have a distressing lot to do that has to be done in a particular hurry. Semi-occasionally they get the fever, or something worse, and have to lay off in the hospital—or worse. After which (if it was only fever) they come back and throw in the high speed again. For the world is learning to eat bananas, and the world must be supplied, just now to the tune of about 60,000,000 bunches annually, 9,000,000 of which come from Limon.

One gets the same sort of a surprise when seeing busy Limon after weeks in lazy Central America that hits one between the eyes when first emerging from the utter, lifelong deadness of a Panamanian jungle and encountering the paroxysm of energetic efficiency that our engineers are directing at

Culebra Cut, or where an army of unexampled genius is raising the vast concrete monoliths of the Gatun Locks, oblivious of the climatic and historic "thou shalt nots" of the torpid environment.

Through the courtesy of officers of the Fruit Company we were extended the welcomed hospitality of the "Lodge" at Limon. The American employees occupy rooms on the second story of the big concrete building which houses the offices below. It is much like a barracks, far from luxurious, but clean, well kept, with shower baths, broad balconies overlooking the plaza and the harbour, and a dining-room with white table-cloths, sugar free from ants, and ice in the drinks one chooses.

Our host had a charming little Spanish girl wife. Also, a newly arrived baby. The young mother proved a delight, with a charming naïveté, heightened by an elusive pronunciation of English words and peculiar little liberties with grammatical construction.

"I am maree twenty-five months," she explained. "For the first year I have no babee at all, an' I am heartbreak, for the marry life with-

out the babee eet is sad, I think. Then, later, I am very seek, an' go to my mother in San José. Then comes the babee, an' makes everything *so* happee, an' come to Limon back, an' my husban' he too love my babee almos' as much as I do. For dee boy he ees like his fader—what-you-say—so, so—when he smile—so nice to look at." Here a coquettish smile which in itself was decidedly "nice to look at."

It was all pretty, but the way she told of their romance was best of all.

"Once, when I was a girl in San José, the autres say: 'You are so gay, so queek, so fon' of the dance an' sing that you sure-ly will marry a Mashar.' You know what we call American boys? No? Mashar—they come to see Spanish girl, they kiss, perhaps once, perhaps twice, den go 'way to de States an' marree some one else. So I say: 'No, I will never marry a Mashar,' an' I tink dat too. But then one day I come to Limon to see frens sail in steamer. An' afterward at the hotel I am eaten soup, an' in comes Mashar, an' I tink he has nice face. Then I—what do you call it?—*flit*? No, not flit. You know; I smile, he smile—an'—we-do-not-know-each-other." This

last in one continuous rattle. "Ah! Dat ees it—'fleeret'—so—we flirt.

"Well, he sit near an' eat his soup. I see him look at me. I look again; he is not eat his meat. Next I look an' smile—*so* leetle. He does not eat his *ensalada*. He seem to watch all the time me, so I look away, which is right. When I am finish my café he rush away, like mad. Then presently he come again with a young man whom I know by the arm, who say: 'Señorita, confer the honour of your acquaintance upon Señor ——' So, queekly he walk with me away, we two, to the balcony, an' all evenin' he talk so nice to me, an' at las' he geeve me a little ring which I always wear, an' I geeve him one of mine, an'—an'—in two months we are marree. An' soon, perhaps, we go to New York."

And there in tabloid form you have the romance of the American Office Man, on \$80.00 a month. Let us hope the sequel may be as happy as the *dénouement*.

After the pleasant supper, upon the concrete balcony of the "Lodge," we sat talking with our queerly mated host and hostess and drinking in the visual delights of the tropical twilight time.

Directly below was the park, an indiscriminate tangle of dark banyan trees bordering it, their branches standing out against the paling opalescence of the sky. Encompassed by the picturesque trees lay the little park, bright with gay tropical plants and shrubs, with patches of emerald grass, about and through them winding walks with a señorita and her escort strolling here and there, the former invariably with a gay shawl about her shoulders. To the right, seen through branches and over the cobbled street, are the red, corrugated iron roofs of the storehouses and wharf buildings, and beyond them the wharves themselves, with the steamer masts and funnels rising over the buildings, which hid the hulls from view. The smoke rises straight toward the cloudless sky; not a breath of wind stirs the foliage in the park. Beyond is the surf, whose monotonous rumble is the only music for the scene, shrilly interrupted now and then when some banana train rattles down the street and out upon the wharf, disastrously upsetting the peace of the universe with clanging bell and shrieking whistle.

Even after the darkness blots the view from sight, the trains keep up their intermittent tur-

moil, for there is a steamer to be loaded, and so all night thousands of bunches of bananas are carried beneath our balcony, on the first relay of their varied journey from the shadowy depths of their jungle homes.

That evening we had our introduction to the Costa Rican chapter of the banana story, only we commenced at the end of the chapter, instead of at the beginning. Theoretically, one should first meet the banana while it hangs on the tree—where, by the way, one encounters it *upside down*; for in its native jungles the banana does not behave as we of the north know it, with its length decorously curved downward, but instead points heavenward in a quite unexpected manner. However, as intimated, we studied the fruit as a Chinaman reads—from finis to preface. In the corner groceries of the homeland we had seen the bunches, flyspecked, yellow, green, and dingy brown. That marked the ultimate period of their production—the transitory stage that speedily merges from production into consumption when the youngster with a nickel happens along and gets his “two for.” Now, at Limon, we saw the banana being started on its way for that corner grocery and the

pushcarts. The next day we had an opportunity of viewing the actual raising of the fruit.

The name "Limon" means, in Spanish, "citrus fruit." However, lemons and oranges figure little in the affairs of modern Limon, whose chief claim upon fame is the fact that from it are shipped more bananas than from any other port in the world. More than 9,000,000 bunches were exported from it in 1910, and that enormous number would have been greater still had not unfortunate floods played havoc with some of the best producing districts.

Do you realise, by the way, that if you failed to eat three dozen bananas last year you did not get your share? Back in 1910 over 40,000,000 bunches, or more than 3,000,000,000 bananas, were imported into the United States. Forty years ago few people indeed could boast of having even seen a bunch of bananas, far less tasted the fruit, and yet within the last decade our consumption of the "treasure of the tropics" has doubled, and two years ago the amount paid by the public for this now everyday luxury was close to \$35,000,000.

All of which hints at the commanding importance of the banana in the southland, and shows why a Central American pilgrimage that did not

include at least a cursory visit to its haunts would be indeed incomplete.

Limon is owned, heart and soul, by the United Fruit Company. Perhaps that statement should be modified—yes, assuredly. For retrospection convinces us that as a matter of candid fact Limon has no soul; a banana shipping port, existing between banana swamps and the Caribbean Sea, is devoid of soul, from the very nature of the case. However, the physical appurtenances of Limon bear the brand of the U. F. C., just as it is hinted Costa Rican officialdom also does. Suffice to say, in this connection, that the American corporation has done more for Costa Rica than it ever could or would have done for itself, and that the universal custom of throwing mud at the top man is as fashionable in Central as it is in North America. How many of us, for instance, have heard it said that “Wall Street dictates to Washington”? The truth in one instance is probably as accurate as in the other.

The Fruit Company has blessed itself with infinite system and skill. Thanks to the fact that its foreign operations keep it without the pale of domestic trust legislation, and because there are

not and probably never can be any international laws regulating such daily occurrences as restraint of trade and throttling of competition in several lands at once, the clever Yankee corporation has flourished amazingly, its tropical, as well as its northern affairs, guided by wise heads in conservative Boston town.

The company owns lands, and on them raises its fruit. It owns railroads, in Costa Rica and elsewhere, and on them carries the bananas from farm to wharf. It owns its shipping facilities, wharves, yards, and harbours, and loads its perishable products upon the scores of steamers of its "Great White Fleet." Its vessels carry the fruit to the markets of the world, not alone to the cities of the United States but also to the British Isles and Europe. And finally, from its own wharves and through its own warehouses, it wholesales the bananas to jobbers who distribute them through the length and breadth of the land.

The present President of Costa Rica, Ricardo Jiminez, is said to have lost popularity with the average citizens of the republic because he has continued in the footsteps of his predecessors and has smiled upon the Gringo, permitting him to

develop his properties and his concessions unmolested. It appears that the Jiminez party got into power on a more or less tacit understanding that there would be a shake-up as regarded the so-called "American invasion," and the "average citizen," who sees the American getting rich and himself no richer, naturally has a chip on his shoulder, after the prevalent custom of average citizens.

For instance, it was whispered that the Fruit Company would be obliged to pay an export duty upon its bananas of three or more cents a bunch. Previously, it had been paying nothing at all. That sounded excellently well to the average citizen. It makes no difference if your A. C. lives in Kansas or Costa Rica, is a socialist or an ardent Central American patriot, his instincts are the same—if you see a head above the general level take a swipe at it. That, we believe, is an axiom of Democracy. But the big export duty on bananas never got beyond the campaign-talk point. To-day the Fruit Company is paying one cent a bunch, and it is n't even doing that on the fruit it buys, because the Costa Rican banana raiser found that his contracts with the company

provided that he himself pays "all export duty" while the company generously agreed to care for the import duty in the States. A fair enough division of an unpleasant task, surely! And incidentally, as the company raises only about 30 per cent. of the bananas it exports from the republic, the owners of those other 6,000,000 bunches not unnaturally disliked to see a high export duty come to life, as its payment would come out of their own pockets, thanks to the clever provision of those old contracts.

Perhaps this influential body of interested planters had a lot to do with it. There are wheels within wheels in Costa Rica. As one well informed Fruit Company employee put it, "God and Minor C. Keith alone know what goes on behind the scenes."

At all events, it is known that after the elections a mild bill was drawn up, presumably by local representatives of the corporation, providing for a two cent export tax. The story goes that this was submitted to the head Boston office. Details the chronicle relateth not, but the essence of the Back Bay men's reply was that it was considering no such deals and certainly making no bargains

with a Costa Rican Congress. Incidentally, the hint was dropped that the Boston office would watch with interest local developments; their plans were undecided; they were considering large expenditures and developments in Costa Rica. Also, they were operating in many other places, and were considering with equal fervour enlarging elsewhere. And, of course, it might be necessary somewhat to abandon Costa Rica if the trade there was made unprofitable. Just a hint, but it must have born fruit. Very gently and with no fuss or feathers the new legislature placed the duty at one cent a bunch, and everybody smiled, except a few average citizens, who are said to retain a sore spot in their patriotism. The election in 1914 will show "who 's who," and, perhaps, why. But it won't make any special difference to the banana exporters because the export duty holds for twenty-five years!

Minor C. Keith, above referred to, is the back bone and the real originator of the United Fruit Company, which now has vast ramifications almost beyond belief. Keith came to Costa Rica a poor boy. The story of his fortune-making is a tale of work; hard manual work at first, for he had

the courage to do himself what he later directed others in doing. He and his brother, John C. Keith, married Costa Rican girls. Minor now spends most of his time elsewhere, among other enterprises constructing a railroad in Guatemala, but John C. remains in Costa Rica, apparently wedded by choice to the pretty land.

On the previous day the superintendents of the various districts know exactly how many bunches they will be called upon to provide for the ship whose time of arrival is reckoned by wireless to the hour by the superintendent of export at Limon. The *mandadors*, or heads of farms, in turn are notified how many bunches each farm will be called upon for.

Of course, the number of bunches, and the time of their arrival at the cutting stage, has been reckoned weeks and months in advance, as ship and cars and market must be arranged, and all fruit must be cut at the physiological minute, for if it is left on the stalk even a few days too long it loses all marketable value and becomes a dead loss. The superintendents and their helpers become so proficient in appraising the crop that on one district the estimate upon walks covering more

than 12,000 acres was within 2000 bunches of being correct. The individual growers who sell to the company of course do their own estimating, and are called upon at each steamer sailing for the amount of ready fruit they have on hand.

At daybreak, the Jamaicans are in the field and the bunches are cut. "Nines" and over are called a "bunch" and are paid for at the rate of thirty-one cents, out of which the grower, if the fruit be purchased from outside "walks," pays the export duty of one cent. An eight-hand stem corresponds to three fourths of a standard, and a seven-hand stem to half a bunch, and are paid for accordingly.

Before noon, the box-car trains, with crews of loaders, pick up the bunches, which have been piled beside the track under a covering of leaves to protect them from the sun. By evening that same fruit is being loaded upon the steamers which will be under way to the north before dawn. This is called "twenty-four hour fruit." It is shipped chiefly to Boston and New York for quick consumption. It is, of course, further ripened before picking than the fruit shipped to New Orleans for trans-shipment to the West and Canada, and than

fruit bound for England. This latter is usually "forty-eight hour fruit," that number of hours elapsing between the time of cutting and the time when the steamer leaves the Limon wharf.

The scene on the wharf at a night loading is interesting in the extreme.

Most of the company's vessels have four hatches and at each is an automatic loading contrivance which travels up from the wharf to the deck of the ship, a broad belt, in constant motion, carrying the fruit. A line of singing and leisurely Jamaicans bear the bunches from the box cars to the loader, where they give an extra heave of their shoulders and the burden falls accurately upon the belt. From the deck to the bottom of the hold, in the average large steamer, there are from eight to twelve handlings. Formerly the bananas were shot down an incline to men at the bottom who packed them, but this method was found to injure the fruit somewhat, the side that came in contact with the slide getting "burnt." While the bruise did not injure the fruit to any extent, it spoiled its appearance, thereby cutting market values.

So now all the loading is accomplished by hand. Each hatch has two separate crews, one loading



"The box-car trains, with crews of loaders, pick up the bunches which have been piled beside the track"

the port and the other the starboard side. A series of platforms, something like stairs, extends down from the deck through the hatches, each about four feet below the level of the next highest. On each are a couple of darkies, who pass the bunches down to the team below. At the bottom are Spaniards who carry the heavy bunches—they will weigh about sixty pounds each, on the average—to other Jamaicans, who pack them for the voyage.

I made a long visit to the hold of one of the Fruit Company's ships, accompanied by one of its always courteous representatives. It was cold down there—about fifty degrees, as compared with seventy or more on the dock. The cavernous interior was illuminated with electric lights. The workers sang, and all seemed to take a pleasure in their task, except perhaps the Spaniards who did the carrying from the foot of the human stair to the packers. One reason for the apparent popularity of the night work may have been that the Jamaicans got fifteen cents an hour for it as contrasted to ten cents for day work. The Spaniards got twelve and one half cents, and in the day eight and one half. At the time, they were

packing what they called "three stands and two flats." No, that is not a musical term. It simply means that three tiers of bunches were packed upright, one upon the other, and on top of these two more layers were placed horizontally.

Just before daylight the next morning we heard those workers going home, when the ship was loaded and under way. A more varied or unearthly conglomeration of sound than that produced by a pack of paid-off Jamaicans, with the work day behind them, it is impossible to imagine. To be wakened by it in the depths of the night can be likened to the last act of a nightmare, laid in the land of the damned, where a chorus of all the chaotic noises of this earth are combined into a fiendish melody.

But soon enough the time of dreams and Jamaican revelry ended, to the brazen debauch of a nickelled alarm clock, whose call gave us barely time to swallow the inevitable, and excellent, coffee, and hasten aboard the six o'clock local train for Zent, where we were to be guests on one of the Company's banana plantations for the day.

The ride to Zent takes an hour. The alleged first-class coach is half of a car chiefly devoted to

the transportation of darkies. There were many labourers and Jamaicans at the station and on the train, the women being particularly notable because, as they were returning from shopping visits to the metropolis of Limon, they were naturally bedecked in all their newly purchased finery. One buxom coloured lassie was envied much in the eyes of her sisters, thanks to a vivid hat of rainbow hues and broad scope which she bore proudly on her head, while in her hand she carried the discarded creation of the last season.

On the way to Zent the coughing little train passed through "Boston," "Chicago," and "New York." For all the farms are named, and the titles of the big cities seem popular with these clusters of labourers' shacks, all but lost in the jungle of banana leaves, in the saturated depths of the semi-swamp lands.

Mr. Walter Fletcher, Superintendent of the Zent division, to whom we bore a letter of official introduction, proved both a delightful host and a well-informed lecturer on the ways of the banana in its native haunts.

Leaving maps and data in his office after a cursory examination, in which we gained some idea

of the extent of the Fruit Company's holdings and the diversity of its operations, we sallied forth in the miniature motor-car with which the Superintendent travels about the crisscrossed railroads of his domain. It was a four-wheeled affair, with one cross seat facing frontward, and a sort of catch-on rumble behind, where the one-Jamaican-power portion of the motive equipment hung on.

With the Superintendent at the throttle and my wife and me sandwiched in on the rest of the seat, we started along the track, "Bryan," the negro assistant, starting us with a vigorous shove, and then landing with a running jump upon his meagre perch in the rear.

"Switch!" called the Superintendent, seeing a wrongly set switch ahead.

We were approaching it at a good six-mile gait, or more, and the chugging motor was working itself up manfully.

"Bryan, switch!" No sooner were the words spoken than a miracle happened, a real modern tropical miracle. *A Jamaican negro ran!*

With a jump, Bryan was out of his seat and racing along beside us, headed for that switch bar as if his life depended upon it, and our little car



"Horseless carriages" in Central America



Superintendent Fletcher and the motor car from which we viewed the Zent banana farms

was the Twentieth Century Limited, whose delay for a minute meant national disgrace or docked pay or something equally fatal and important. It was a good run, that initial sprint of Bryan's. Any ten-second collegiate dasher might have been proud of it, especially in that even as early an hour as seven is not notable for coolness in tropical banana lands. Yet with all his speed, I would have wagered sixteen to one that our Bryan could not beat us to the switch until he actually had done so, the tracks were shifted with one practised heave of the bar, and we were speeding onward down the proper steel alley, with our grinning henchman on behind.

In such manner we rode through countless acres of the banana farms. In the Zent district alone are more than 30,000 acres, about 1250 of which are in actual cultivation. The company originally purchased most of this land from the Costa Rican government for about sixteen colones a hectare, or about \$3.25 an acre. All accounts, by the way, are kept both in hectares and colones and in dollars and acres. A hectare is a land measure equivalent to 2.47 acres, and is used in all Spanish-speaking countries.

In all Costa Rica the Fruit Company has about 25,000 acres under cultivation, owning in all more than 100,000 acres.

In the Zent district there are twenty-two farms, each with two white men in charge, a *mandador*, or overseer, and a time-keeper. The *mandadors* are housed very comfortably, and paid from one hundred to one hundred and fifty dollars a month, in addition to which they get free rent, fuel, light, and servants, emoluments which the Superintendent reckoned as representing an addition of fifty per cent. to salaries.

As we rattled along the tracks our guide talked of the country, its products and its possibilities. Having lived for eleven years in Jamaica and Costa Rica, and in all that time having been sick only nine days, he lacked the chronic tropical habit of damning the climate.

"It all depends upon *how* one lives. If you are careful, eat the right things and eat them in moderation, drink little, and know how to take precautions, there need be no trouble for an average man. My wife, too, has been here and in Jamaica for ten years, and she and our three boys, born during that time, have never been sick."



A typical tropical vista

Healthier looking little chaps I never saw. An English governess, just arrived, was to begin their education, there in the heart of the torrid wilderness. A splendid concrete tennis-court and a shower bath indicated one reason for the family health.

I asked about the profits which are supposed to await the hard-working young man who abandons the beaten paths and goes to banana raising among the malarial swamps.

"Yes, there are big profits for many—and disaster for many more. You may say that a man deserves big reward for coming here. Perhaps he does, and certainly if he knows how to win it, it is here waiting for him. The fundamental trouble is that so many come to the banana countries with two thousand dollars and no experience. They inevitably get the experience and lose their money, if they start on the wrong tack. Instead of working for some one else for a few years, until they have picked up the business, they start in for themselves, invariably going back to England or the States without a shilling. And, of course, many are buried, and malaria gets such a hold on others that they are glad to sell out and leave before it's too late."

Probably every one near Limon is told the story of a young Welshman who came to Costa Rica with nothing, nine years ago, and lives abroad while his banana lands net him some \$20,000 annually. He is under thirty and did it all himself by hard work and a little luck. But as there are few lands seeking buyers these bonanza tales get little circulation.

The work is all done by Jamaicans, the Costa Ricans not being able to withstand the climatic hardships of the lowlands. Practically everything is done by contract. Darkies working with the contractors usually get one dollar and twenty-five cents a day, day labourers about ninety cents.

There are five distinct steps in the cultivation of new land for the banana. First, "underbrushing," or clearing out the underbrush. Second, the land is "lined out," or roughly surveyed into fifteen foot squares, the trees being planted fifteen feet apart, each with two hundred and twenty-five square feet of space, one hundred and ninety-three to the acre. Third, the trees are planted, slips or shoots from other trees being used; for long before there is any record of the banana it ceased to have a seed, and now, peculiarly enough,

retains not even a trace of such a method of reproduction. Fourth, the large trees are felled, lopped, and cleared away. Fifth, a drainage system is devised, no small problem in a territory but fifteen feet above sea-level although twenty miles inland from Limon. To plant average raw land and properly prepare it costs about one hundred dollars a hectare. Twelve to eighteen months after that expenditure the first returns will come, under normal conditions.

At first, the novice feels some hesitancy regarding the nomenclature of banana lands. Shall he call them "farms," "plantations," "ranches," "groves," "orchards," or what? Technically speaking, each of these titles is incorrect. "Banana walk" is the true name, the initiated tell you; "farm" or "plantation," however, does well enough, and is far less a damning evidence of "greenness" than it is to call a farm a farm, instead of a ranch, west of the Missouri.

The early morning ride on our funny little car was a pleasant experience and not only afforded a comprehensive view of the supply place for the million push-carts and corner groceries of America but it also opened up some really entrancing

glimpses of the tropical growth and of the hot, humdrum life of the typical tropical workers. The trees and the verdure were more attractive than the social barrenness hinted by the encompassing jungle walls.

Overhead were the red fruits of the Acbee tree, gay in contrast to the dull greenery of their parent leaves, and queer as they are pretty, for not until they are ripe and by splitting open have allowed their poisonous gases to escape are they safe to eat. Crotons, dragon plants, caledias peculiarly vivid, morning-glories, zenias, marigolds, palms, gladiolas, poinsettias, sword ferns, begonias, cocoa-plants, cannas, coleus, hybiscus, cardinal-flowers, and a score of other brilliant and dainty shrubs and flowers flourished promiscuously in the door-yards of the negroes, and were arranged with comparative formality in the garden of the Superintendent's attractive home, where our rapid journeying ended at a most welcome ten o'clock breakfast, whose menu, it must be admitted, was startlingly unexpected. The meal of course was called "breakfast," after the Spanish custom. However, it was neither Spanish nor breakfast, but a rare combination of a Scotch breakfast, an



In the midst of a "Banana Walk"

English dinner, and a tropical *déjeuner*. There was oatmeal, hot and much of it, with the unusual accompaniment of real untinned cow's milk; bacon, eggs, steak, with egg-plant, potatoes, onions, rice, and *yampi*. The latter is an event in itself; it is a species of white potato, imported from Jamaica, thinner skinned and far more delicate than our Irish product.

After two rich desserts there came monkeys—to be examined, not eaten, of course. One was white faced, a marmoset, and the other coal black; both were highly affectionate, of the tenaciously clinging variety. Also we examined bottled specimens of defunct snakes, gathered in many tropical lands, including the terror of the local swamps, called in Costa Rica the Jumping Goff, and the Coral Snake, reputed most dangerous of all, but from whose bites only two per cent. of the banana labourers stricken had died, thanks to heroic medical treatment.

Finally, in the afternoon, we boarded the up-train at Estrada for San José.

The bored Pennsylvania conductor greeted us warmly, casually mentioning, as we skirted a recent washout with snail's-pace deliberation, that

our locomotive had turned turtle twice during the month. In addition to our friend the conductor, we found the same towel in the observation car lavatory. The conductor, we ascertained, had been on the run for five years.

CHAPTER VI

Back in San José



ESPITE that towel, it was delightful to wind up the tousled mountain-sides from the steaming banana country to the crisp upland air.

One of the pleasant incidents of the long seven hour journey is a stop at a little station where old women crowd to the car windows offering pineapples for sale. They have the fruit cut into slices, which you gingerly take up in your hands, vainly hoping that the spattering juice will not leave irradicable stains upon your clothing. It usually does, but the fruit is worth the price. Sweet, juicy, fragrant,—surely there is no edible quite so appetising on a hot day as an absolutely fresh and ripe pineapple.

As a “chaser” to the pineapple we invested in some “*pejdalles*.” Despite their unpronounceability they make interesting eating. About the size of a small russet apple, they resemble yellow

and over-ripe tomatoes, the kind we delighted to throw at each other in the short-trouser stage of our development; the inside resembles a sweet potato in appearance, and tastes much like a mild form of chestnut. In the centre is a pit, about the size of a plum pit. While a bit dry, the fruit is good, at least for those with an inquiring turn of palate.

An even more fascinating local concoction is called "*queso de almendras*." As its name indicates it is "cheese of almonds," and is a rich, solid paste, oily, much of the appearance of hard cream-cheese, and with the most deliciously delicate flavour imaginable. It is sweet, infinitely indigestible, and, we were told, is imported from Spain. A pound which I attempted to take to San Francisco melted in southern Mexico. What is worse, it also melted on my best Panama hat!

But to return to that train luncheon. It had an amusing prelude. The train stopped at the station mentioned, and most of the rabble alighted. Being inexperienced, we sat idly by, watching our better informed fellow-passengers gorge themselves with the dainties and undainties proffered, for a nominal consideration, by the old women in the

booths on the station platform. Noting that we bought nothing, and perhaps suspecting that we could not afford the luxury of a meal (though how could they have known that I was a newspaper man?), two native gentlemen who sat across the aisle came to our assistance. At their feet was a huge feed bag. It is perhaps worth mentioning that there were also, in the aisle and on and under the seats immediately appropriated by them, several chickens captivated as to their legs, a distinctly yellow "houn' dog," a pair of leather saddle-bags, and a couple of children, whose bare legs commingled indiscriminately with the above inventoried collection.

The gallant gentlemen unearthed the feed bag. From it they fished out a multitude of things edible, chief among which were mushy *tortillas* and meat of an historic hue. In addition there were pastries and bread and fruit of one kind and another, all fairly well *en omelette*, and all on an intimate footing with the clothing that comprised the balance of the bag's contents. The delicacies were first dusted—a hygienic and necessary operation—and then offered to us. The medium through which the offer was made to my wife was

a barefoot, bashful girl. Of course we accepted. I am ashamed to relate that the ultimate fate of the *tortilla* and sour cheese is a matter of secret history; if one should search out a certain persistent bristle-backed hog who noses under the trains at that particular station, it is possible that the mystery might be solved.

San José was reached at dusk. A brisk journey in a licensed but unseaworthy hack brought us to the hotel. And there the "homecoming" was notable.

Leaving my wife to go directly to our room, I made a detour through the lower patio, or courtyard, to inquire for mail and to secure hot water for a very necessary shave. The bearded cavalier who presided behind the combined bar and office counter, and who might have prospered mightily as the heavy villain in an old-fashioned "meller-dramer," delivered a tremendous amount of Spanish at me. It was most unvillainish Spanish. If it was greeting, it was a flowery and expansive one, even for a Spanish cavalier. Not knowing what else it could be, and my Spanish being as non-existent as his English, we progressed no further, and instead of endeavouring to unravel the rhetor-

ical mystery I proceeded on my way, clasping the ever-precious diminutive mug of "*agua caliente*," and meditating on the vagaries of life that should make hot water the one hot article difficult to obtain in a land where the mercury never takes advantage of the lower reaches of the thermometer, and cooks revel in tongue-torturing seasoning.

However, the blow came, all unsoftened by this well intentioned and uncomprehended explanation by the misplaced villain.

"There 's some one in our room," said my wife, as I emerged into the upper hallway.

There was. The room for which we were paying, and in which we had left our clothing and trunks, and whose only key we fondly supposed was at that minute reposing in my trousers pocket, was occupied. The "some one" developed into a well intentioned gentleman and his wife. Later, they admitted hailing from New Jersey. But ultimately we forgave them everything, so courteous were they in coming to our assistance.

Just at that juncture the Señora was out. Naturally. It is part of a landlady's business to be absent when storm clouds darken the domestic horizon. The bearded barmaid was helpless,

conversationally and otherwise. He was, however, apologetic, in vigorous Castilian, and the more voluble his abject dismay the more efficient, I fear, became my own exercise of plain old-fashioned American—the kind our grandfathers probably used when they had trouble with the Indians at Plymouth Rock and thereabout. I said a great number of things about Spanish hotel customs that would have been better left unsaid. Not left unsaid because they were unmerited, mind you, but because they were all lost and wasted. It is a sad tragedy to swear and not be understood! I often wonder if that heavy villain really thought I, too, was apologising, as I thought he was! But that opens up complications—perhaps he was returning me as good as I gave him!

Finally, about the eighth round, Señora appeared. She was a good-looking Spanish lady, dark, fiery, and of ample though graceful proportions.

She was amazed; she was aggrieved; she was apologetic. She was everything that could be desired; at least so she seemed through the medium of an English-speaking negro-boy waiter, who established himself as a sort of official interpreter.

"You may have another room," the boy translated.

Whereat I delivered an impromptu oration upon the sacredness of integrity, explaining at length that I had engaged that room for a week and intended not only to pay for it, but also to have it. I enlarged upon the fact that we had left all our belongings strewn about the stolen apartment, and that no one had a right to use it even if we remained absent a month, as long as we footed the bills. Finally, calling upon the Monroe Doctrine in holy witness of the justness of my position, I demanded immediate eviction of the interlopers.

By this time the entire hotel retinue had gathered, as well as the guests and every one within earshot—which included a generous area! The attraction of our dispute had become triple, a three-ringed circus, in fact, as the Americans, who had dressed after the first guns of our approach disturbed them, formed the centre of one group, and my wife of another, while I, retaining the amateur interpreter (he was *very* amateur, it may be remarked) as I would have cherished a priceless treasure, occupied the centre of the arena. Linguistically, it was Babel; every one talked, in

several languages, and gesticulated each in his or her own preordained manner. It is all very funny to think of now, but at the time it was as gravely bitter as a nominating convention.

Finally, Señora capitulated. We obtained our room. I confess I never quite knew what became of the evicted couple. Señora, after all, was but a woman of business; believing that we were to be gone several nights, she had improved the golden opportunity by selling her cabbages twice. It was unkind for us to have returned.

Domestically, the remainder of our two weeks in San José was undisturbed. Each morning the sun played hide-and-seek with the snowy clouds, shadow and sunshine flitting across the rounded green hills that greeted us from our window, looking out over the tiled roofs of the city. The towers of the cathedral were close at hand, and near by, too, was the plaza, whence the music of the band wafted up to us in the evening.

Just below that window was an alley. It was something of a miracle, was that alley; there were chickens in it, and ducks and rabbits; also, there was swill enough and to spare, which lasted only until the animals had made away with it. The



From the window of the San José hotel we saw the cathedral spires across red-tiled roofs



In Managua, capital of Nicaragua. Presidential offices on right

chief scavengers, however, were the vultures, great black birds with wicked hooked noses, beady eyes, vast claws, and the sepulchral appearance of professional mourners. They were fat and very lazy, moving with grave deliberation, excepting only when the appearance of some tidbit made a quick dash necessary to avert its appropriation by some less gifted chicken or slow-brained duck.

The meals at the Hotel San José were patterned on the universal gastronomic schedule of Central America.

First there is "café," or *almuerzo*. It comes any time from daybreak to ten o'clock. It consists of coffee, *con leche* (with milk) or *con agua* (made with water only), and nothing more substantial than a roll or some *pan dulce*, (sweet bread or cake), anointed usually with limp butter that first saw the light of day in Denmark, and travelled thence in small tins. The state of the butter's relaxation, as we called it, was a sure test of the time it had been opened. Also, there were other tests, not necessarily visual, and less pleasant.

Comida comes next. It is "breakfast," and is perpetrated usually between ten o'clock and

noon. It is extraordinarily ample, there being at least three meat courses at the better hotels, introduced by a substantial soup, embellished by many vegetables, and ending with some sort of very sweet dessert, or fruit, if you insist upon it. Usually it is the traveller alone who eats fruit in a tropical fruit country, for the natives seem to care little for what we treasure as rare delicacies. Central America runs to meats, and poor meat at that, the unholy habit of eating almost new-killed beef being nearly universal, chiefly because cold storage facilities are practically non-existent. Pork and mutton are notably absent, cow products comprising the entire gamut.

Cena, the supper of Spanish land, much resembles the breakfast. There is, perhaps, a little less to it.

Sunday in San José may be made a delightful day, if the taste of the traveller be not too strenuous. For San José is not a city of "sights," nor is it crowded with picturesque bits, whose searching out offers endless fascination for the connoisseur in things beautiful. I do not mean that the proud little capital lacks charm, or that it is devoid of interest. Rather, it is limited. Compared with the historical wealth of Panama, for instance,



Jamaicans cutting the bunches. The adjoining plants will replace the stalk cut, producing bunches in rotation



"The scavengers are the vultures, great black birds with the sepulchral appearance of professional mourners "

it offers little to the antiquarian, or tourist bent upon seeking relics of the "goode olde days."

Take coffee at nine, say, though that is a late hour to be under way in the morning. Doubtless you will eat the remainder of the French bread, neglected the previous night, and doubtless the butter will taste curiously like cheese, as usual. But the coffee is excellent and the hot milk plentiful. Also you may have oranges or bananas, though the eating of these weeds of the land indicates that you are a foreigner, as no native of the orange countries considers this common fruit as worthy of note. It has been well said that the dweller in stock countries does not eat grass, and why should a housekeeper in a land which exports nine million bunches of bananas think of including this universal fruit in her menu?

While you are at "coffee" the band will have been playing in the central plaza, before the cathedral, inviting you to wander there and listen to the excellent music, as it always is in Spanish-speaking countries. We did not see or hear a phonograph in San José; doubtless there is too much really good free music to have need or desire for home products of the "canned" order.

Between the numbers played by the large military band the music of the organ in the cathedral drifts out across the park, in rather faint and staid competition to the lively tripping airs of the bandstand.

The cathedral, said to be the finest in Central America, is large and perfectly kept, evidently receiving a generous support. Outside are conventional fluted pillars *en façade*, approached by a low flight of broad steps. Externally, the building offers little that is unique or mentionable, being little more than a square of grey-white plastered walls, massive but unelaborate, with façades of pillars in front and on the sides, while natty little parks abut the lateral approaches.

You enter the cathedral. Several hundred women—they are almost all feminine, these worshippers—their heads covered with coloured shawls, kneel at the benches that extend from the door down the chancel to the altar. There, long candles glimmer almost gloomily among the recesses, elaborate with their equipment of divine figures and carvings, while priests, in white and black and purple robes, move about in the shadows with slow solemnity.



At prayer in a Guatemalan church

As the notes of the organ swell and billow through the heavy air with the magnetic, mellow *timbre* of this most appealing of all of man's music makers, the dull voices of the priests mount with them, chanting from the dim depths of the remote altar regions, while the shawled heads bow lower, the barefooted men kneel, and the women cross themselves with quick little frightened gestures, only too suggestive of the grim respect with which they regard the exercises of their mistress, Mother Church.

Then out from the railed-off stairs and low platforms below the altars steps forth a slow procession led by a purple-gowned priest, with boys clad in white on either side, each bearing a tall taper, while the priest himself holds aloft a golden crucifix. Behind are other priests, and in the rear a venerable old man totters blindly, his thick feeble lips moving slowly in words of prayer, his shaking hands making the cross sign over his breast and bowed forehead as he advances. Two priests are at his side, supporting his robes. A younger one, in white, walks immediately in advance of him, swinging an ornate incense pot from which clouds of subtly sweet smoke rise, shrouding the venerable

leader and sifting out over the worshipping congregation in flat waves that finally merge into the shadows of the upper regions of the great edifice. This procession walks down one aisle, across the back of the church, and back to the altar on the opposite side. And all the people bow and kneel and are doubly humble.

It is impressive, and instructive. It is not, of course, so majestic, nor nearly so awe-inspiring as similar ceremonies in the larger and richer Roman churches of the old world, as in Italy, for instance. But the lesson lies not so much in the ceremony itself, as in the aspect of the worshippers. They are reverent; that is true, and it is also true that reverence is an excellent virtue, and is perhaps the backbone of many a nation or race. But here, if I mistake not, is almost universal *reverence without intelligence*. The Church is the mistress of the poor of Central America. If they ever knew, they know no longer what it is that they reverence, these uneducated poor of the Tropics, and when reverence gets to that pass it becomes fear, or something so closely akin to fear that it deserves no better name. And that unreverenced fear is the foundation of the Church's strength in

the Central American lands wherein it retains any great prestige and position.

In contrast to the solemnity of the cathedral service is the gay vista of the outer sunlit world seen through an open side door; a sunny bit of flagged flooring, a glimpse of green foliage, a palm outlined against the blue sky. It is hard to remain in the sombre church interior, with that fraction of the outdoor loveliness beckoning, even though the slim Señorita across the aisle does glint the merest hint of a smile with her dark eyes, as a chance movement momentarily brushes the demure shawl from about her pretty, oval face.

The outdoor wins. And in the sun again, you wonder if, after all, it was mere chance that moved the shawl, provoking the opportunity for that fleeting glance, or something more. *Quien sabe?* Romance may lurk even in the shadow of Mother Church, in Spanish land.

CHAPTER VII

The Ocean Highway



THE one and only broad highway of Central America is the water that bounds it. There are no inter-republic railroads, few waggon roads worth mentioning and none worth travelling, except as a last resource. The most used sea-path is that up the west coast, because, with the exception of Costa Rica, nearly all the important cities have their access from the Pacific.

Up in Washington, D. C., there is a beautiful marble building which is the home of the Pan-American Union, and incidentally houses an elaborate relief map of Central and South America. The Union is, nominally, a sort of publicity confederation of the various Latin countries of the western hemisphere.

The only grudge that I hold against the Union, it may be well to state before proceeding further,



“ In Washington there is a beautiful marble building, the home of the Pan-American Union ”

is that one of its courteous officials, who asserted that he was quite familiar with the territory, convinced me that it was essential for my social happiness that I drag a North American dress suit through Central America. He impressed me with the fearful importance of the matter. He made me believe that without that funereal badge of gentility I would find myself floundering hopelessly in Latin land, a sort of soul officially damned, adrift without possibility of social salvation. And I believed him. Not only that, but I toted that blessed suit from the Tivoli hotel in Panama to the St. Francis in San Francisco, and never once did I wear it. Not once. And yet we met a president or two, several near-presidents, and not a few of the socially élite. So take the advice of one who has suffered: never inflict a dress suit upon yourself in the Tropics.

But about that relief map. Down in a cool big room, back of a cool Spanish-style courtyard wherein there are a fountain, some palms, and some uncomfortable chairs, it holds the centre and the attention of any one who chances to see it. It is perhaps thirty feet long. On both sides of Central America are the oceans, as is

fitting and proper. Waltzing up and down the coasts is a hemstitch affair of dotted lines that represent the course of the steamers which are scheduled to play between the ports neatly marked out on the map.

It is all very impressive. I took my first Central American jaunt with—or on—that map. It was the easiest thing imaginable—on the map.

“Here is Port So-and-so,” explained my philosopher and friend of the dress suit hallucination. “Let’s see—oh, yes, an excellent hotel. Quite comfortable. Route to the capital? Yes, indeed, enjoyable in the extreme. From here you go to—” and he pointed to another harmless looking point where the hemstitch lines converged at an alleged port.

Altogether, it was delightful. I made that entire Central American trip, with trimmings, without the slightest difficulty—on that map! And the other information—the printed kind. It was just about as satisfactory. Steamers left one place and arrived at another with vast (printed) precision, while train schedules were equally satisfactory. It was, indeed, as easy to lay out an itinerary for Central America, I found, as it would have been for Europe.

With this difference only. Elsewhere it is often possible to follow out itineraries that have been concocted. In Central America it is not. A map is a pleasant thing with which to aggravate one's satiable curiosity, especially such an impressive map as that of the Pan-American Union. But place not thy faith in maps, nor in time-tables and sailing schedules. The last, especially, are elastic and can be distorted endlessly. South of Mexico they are roaring farces. It is said that a Pacific Mail sailing schedule reads as accurately upside down as right side up. Which quite possibly is true.

But don't misunderstand. All this makes Central American travel doubly delightful. Every bit of it is distinctly an adventure. You can never know just where you will be at a given time—which is good for a North American. The point is simply that one should go into Central America with one's eyes open.

And as we ambled up the western water highway and cut our eye-teeth in things Central American, all this began to sink home. So we settled back in our steamer chairs under the awnings, sipped lemonade, and watched the oily sea slip sternward

at an hourly rate of some nine knots, while we read, ruminated, and talked in appropriate proportions.

North America's most picturesque early history was enacted south of the Rio Grande, the river that separates us with such astounding abruptness from a territory peopled with races utterly divorced from us in tongue, inheritance, and instinct. Between Mexico and Panama were enacted the dramas of the gallant *conquistadores* and the ungallant rogues of the Spanish Main, a century or two before the Alleghanies ceased to be the western deadline of our own incipient republic.

And rich as is its historical heritage, no territory on this hemisphere has been so well endowed by nature; the wealthiest products of the temperate climes thrive as neighbours to the lavish tropical growths. For those to whom the productive vagaries of the Tropics hold special charm, Central America is indeed a happy hunting-ground, and one no less attractive to the seeker of beautiful scenery and that illusive desideratum styled "human interest."

But Central America is a book bound in a misleading cover. The binding is dingy and uninviting; the interior pages are those of an *edition*

de luxe. In that respect it remarkably resembles a Spanish house, which, as a rule, has about as unprepossessing an exterior as readily can be imagined, and as pleasing an interior. Usually little is to be seen but bleak walls, broken, if at all, by a few barred windows, while the door is apt to be about as hospitable in appearance as the studded entrance to some mediæval castle. But once past the frowning exterior and you come upon a smiling fairyland: a sunny patio, brightened with flowers and shrubs, a sparkling fountain, and a picturesque colonnade with bright tiled flooring and, perhaps, exquisite carvings; hammocks, luxurious chairs, and the most charming hospitality in the world, all reinforced by such diversified complements as gaily plumed parrots and dark-eyed señoritas—and there you have a Spanish home, from within.

So with Central America. From its ports you see it at its very worst. A hot white beach, a hotter flat town, a spindle-legged iron wharf with corrugated roofed warehouses, an uncertain railroad, and a superabundance of pompous officialdom comprise the Alpha and Omega of the usual southland port. Just behind this unenthusing intro-

duction, even if actual experience has not proven its discomforts beyond peradventure, you know that the coastal plain extends back a score or so of miles; all this plain is low, all of it is hot and soggy, much of it is semi-swampy, and none of it is a white man's abiding place by choice. There, in a crude summary, you have what most chance travellers see of Central America, which is one great reason why Central America is maligned.

But beyond the gateway lies a Paradise. All the best of Central America, historically, scenically, economically, politically, and socially, is hidden in the highland regions of the continental Cordilleras. The cities are tucked away among the hills, from seventy to one hundred miles inland from the two coasts. The reasons for their location are double. First came health and comfort, for the uplands, with altitudes ranging from two thousand to five thousand feet, offered a climate almost ideal. Secondly, when the capitals of the present republics were in the making the two shores were ravaged by piratical plunderers, so that naturally the wealthy little municipalities saw fit to remain modestly removed from the highroad of these freebooters.



A glimpse of the Guatemala hinterland
“Beyond the gateway lies a Paradise. All the best of Central
America is hidden in the highland regions”

The results of the present location of the population centres are likewise double. Because of their isolation from water transportation—the only carrying factor that figured at all importantly in the upbuilding of the earliest American towns—and the extreme difficulties of any transportation at all over the muddy and hilly trails, the growth of the Central American cities has been stunted. During the last decade railroads from the coast to the interior have in a great measure solved the old difficulties, adding an advantage, however, which in many instances has been more than offset by the economic demoralisation of the commonwealths by political turmoil and blood-sucking. A second result was that in their efforts to escape attacks by sea and the ravages of the lowland climate, cities grew up where later volcanic upheavals wreaked havoc with them. Such was the story of the proudest of them all, old Guatemala City.

Getting away from “happy little Costa Rica” had proved something of an undertaking, thanks to the necessity of unwinding a goodly amount of red tape, which process chiefly took the form of unsuspected official charges that cropped up for liquidation at the last minute.

There were some funny incidents connected with that embarkation, one of which concerned our trunks; trunks are more apt to supply travelers' tragedies than comedies, however. When we went inland to the capital the trunks had been left in the custom-house at Puntarenas, and while I was busy about town securing the necessary official stamps, passport visés and other things necessary to make our departure legal and possible, my wife attempted some changes in the contents of the trunks, replenishing our bags from them. When I got back to the wharf I found the trunk trays spread about her and a score of pop-eyed unlookers regarding with intoxicated interest every move of the strange white lady who chose to do her packing in the custom-house. It had proved a delightful and, doubtless, an instructive hour for them. She told me that every time she essayed to lift a tray, some dusky gallant offered his services, while at certain junctures she had become so embarrassed that some transfers of lingerie and other affairs had been postponed until my return and inhospitable mien urged the audience to seek amusements elsewhere.

An old priest was among the motley assortment

that boarded the good ship *Acapulco*. He was wrinkled and yellow, with quizzical blue eyes regarding the world helplessly through great gold-rimmed spectacles. His robe was the usual black flowing affair, bound round the waist with a girdle, and decorated at the wrists with lace that was evidently very antique, judging both by its texture and its griminess. On his head perched the conventional beaver hat, hot, low-crowned, and broad of brim. But his feet were the climax of his ecclesiastical attire; in themselves, they were normal pedal extremities, but in some way the good father had placed the right shoe upon the left foot, and *vice versa*. They were enormous yellow shoes, quite new, and they squeaked most prodigiously, evidently to the secret discomfiture of the *padre* and the delight of such onlookers as noted them.

On these boats one can meet every species of mankind. They are the social clearing-house of the Tropics.

Among our fellow-passengers on one of these brief port-to-port trips was a Congressman. He had been looking over the Canal, without special injury to either it or himself. He was a notably epigrammatic fellow, for a Congressman.

"Nine tenths of what we call piety is nothing but indigestion," said he, in commenting upon certain traits of a young Englishman whose sanctity annoyed him. The Britisher objected to cards in the smoking-room on the Sabbath. Perhaps the Congressman was right.

Fresh from the Canal, he had many Canal stories, among them a true incident of a foreman who narrowly escaped punishment under a rule that forbids the use of profanity to employees by their superiors. The foreman in question was a notable offender. The case had gone hard against him, and it was established beyond a shadow of a doubt that the language he had unlimbered upon a negro labourer was, to put it mildly, painful and free.

"Well, have you anything to say for yourself?" asked the judge, after a laborious trial.

"Just this, your honour," grinned the Irishman. "I used them words all right enough, only you see, it was n't to an *employee*—I discharged the nigger just the minute before I began!" And that settled the case.

At dinner, the first night out of Puntarenas, a Chinaman created a little rumpus. It was a racial affair, and interesting. When he entered

the room, every seat at the main table was taken, except one at the left of the captain's vacant place, that officer not having put in an appearance. The Chinaman looked about the room. He had his choice of going to an obscure corner, where he might have been unmolested, or of "starting something." He chose the latter course, perhaps because the chip of having been ousted from Costa Rica (Celestials are barred there) was still on his shoulder. Then he struck trouble. The chief steward quietly asked him to vamoose.

"Why?" asked Mr. Chinaman.

The steward explained that he could eat at the second table; it was customary, it appears, to serve "foreigners" at the second sitting. The Chinaman objected—strenuously. His eyes grew narrower even than God had made them, a bit of red flicked in his yellow cheek, and his voice rose shrilly. He was a very mad Chinaman. He stood on his rights; he had paid full fare, and why should he not get the same service as the others?

But the steward steered clear of the ethics of the question. What he wanted was to get the Chinaman out, with, or without, a scene. Assistant stewards sidled up, and all at once the inter-

loper was persuaded to abandon his position, protesting. As he was bundled up on deck his voice came back; he was swearing manfully, in excellent American. Thereafter he was a very sullen Chinaman; noiseless, murderous. Also, he ate at the second table.

"Where do you draw the line?" I asked the steward, later.

"Heaven knows. A matter of instinct mostly," he replied. Yes, they fed negroes with the rest of the passengers, he admitted that. One had to, for apparently every fourth Central American, or thereabouts, has negro blood. It is a matter of comparative hues. Yourself and your uncle may be as dissimilar, from a chromatic standpoint, as Miles Standish and Topsy—but both may be large coffee shippers on the Pacific Mail. And one must respect good customers, especially in these days when German boats are cutting in on the business!

There you have a little instance that spells a big story. That Chinaman was educated, well dressed, and well mannered. But he was taboo. The man seated beside me at the captain's table had kinky hair, smelled outlandishly, and ate

with his knife. However, he probably shipped coffee.

Some twenty-odd lazy hours out from Puntarenas we came to San Juan del Sur, the southernmost of Nicaragua's two Pacific ports. Behind a precipitous headland lies a little crescent beach, which faces a harbour perhaps half a mile wide at its open mouth, more picturesque than satisfactory, as it is quite open to blows from the west. There are a few houses, chiefly hidden by palms, a tiny wharf with some iron-roofed buildings behind it, and a few tubby lighters anchored in the roadstead.

Herr Himmel, the patriarch of the community, came out to the *Acapulco*. He is a venerable Santa Claus individual, past eighty, and has boarded every Pacific Mail boat for thirty years. Besides being agent for the line, he seems to be about everything else ashore, practically owning the town. He ran away from Germany as a youngster, went to sea, and in the course of his wanderings landed at this remote spot in Nicaragua, where he settled down. When he came there was nothing else in San Juan but himself. Now it is a thriving community of five hundred or more, and a considerable distributing business is carried on with the

interior, notably with the town of Rivas, which receives all its supplies on mule-back from San Juan during the dry season when the roads are mediumly passable. As an evidence of his activity in lines not entirely commercial, it is said that every child in San Juan resembles Herr Himmel. That may be gross slander.

At five on the afternoon of the 23d of December, we came to anchor in the little bay. San Juan had suffered from a superabundance of excitement that day, as the steamer *San Juan*, southbound, had left but a few hours before our arrival, and as every one who wanted work had had a hand in unloading her and had been paid off, there was, of necessity, a jubilee in progress and further labour was out of the question.

So we watched the revellers make fast the lighters and go ashore for the fiesta, while every one from the chief mate down to the deck steward expressed himself concerning Nicaraguan characteristics. The *San Juan* had brought home mail which would be waiting at Corinto, our next port. And as most of the passengers were to get off at Corinto, they were all anxious to arrive there in time for Christmas. All of which inter-



Corinto, Nicaragua, boasts the rare luxury of a wharf



Along the ocean highway of Central America

ested the folks ashore not at all. It was their privilege as well as their pleasure to keep us tied up in the harbour as long as they chose.

"The trouble with these people," said the mate, as he fretted about the forward deck, "is that they have only two signals. One is 'Half speed ahead,' and the other is 'Stop.' And I think they prefer the latter to the former."

It was after nine the next morning, "the day before Christmas," when a lighter came leisurely out to us, and the unloading work began.

After a little bargaining, a native boat took four of us ashore, at fifty cents a head for the round trip, which doubtless was exorbitant. We had hoped to get much fruit and perhaps some chocolate and candy for Christmas celebration, but the best we could do was to purchase tinned jam, of English make, and a glass of lemon drops, reminiscent of the dark ages.

The most active beings in San Juan are the pelicans. Hundreds of them conduct a rattling fishing business along the shore, the loafers riding sleepily just beyond the rough surf and the workers soaring about overhead, perhaps twenty feet above the water, until they sight the fish they want, and

then shooting down perpendicularly into the sea, they strike the surface, giving a peculiar twist of their heads and opening their huge maws. There is a white splash, the big birds disappear partially for a second or two, and then up come their clownish faces, positively smiling with satisfaction. The big receptacles beneath their bills are filled with water, which they let out in some clever way until only the fish remain, whereupon they swallow their hard-won meal reflectively.

Shortly after dark we "heft anchor" and left the harbour. Even this delayed get-away was effected only because the stevedores received a military impetus, so to speak. They had gone on strike when we approached, demanding double pay for Sunday work, and entirely refusing to do anything for any pay whatever on the night of our arrival. So the next morning along came the malcontents, with a handful of soldiers herding them, the latter armed with loaded rifles which forcibly suggested the advisability of rustling freight. It proved an admirable system, for not only breaking strikes but also for making the strikers work. Its success in any country but Nicaragua may be doubted.

If you approach Corinto at daylight, it is well worth while to be out on deck even before the dawn. If it happens to be Christmas morning, as it was with us, the approach is all the finer because of the associations of the day.

On the right, above the mists of the dawn that cling close to the sea, rise the mountains of the Cordilleras, graceful cones, dim and filmy at first and gradually hardening into deep purple outlines against the delicate morning sky. They are volcanoes, all of them. One, Momotombo, loftiest of all the Nicaraguan peaks, is active, as is evidenced by the smoke which slowly billows upward from the crater top.

Corinto, chief of Nicaragua's ports, lies snugly behind a small island, very close to which the ship passes as it enters the secure little harbour, turning almost at right angles. Lowlands and swamps stretch back from the coast to the mountains, perhaps fifteen miles away, which rise directly without any foothill introduction.

There is a wharf at Corinto, a rare luxury for a Central American port. The wharf company, I understand, has an exclusive concession, so it charges exclusive prices and gives any kind of

service. However, even at that, it is far preferable to the usual lighters, of which more anon. Back from the wharf lies the little town, whose chief feature is its one "main street," which skirts the water's edge and affords a reasonable excuse for the "Hotel de Corinto" and the custom-house, wherein flourish Corinto's two principal industries, namely, the enjoyment of liquid refreshments in the bar-room of the former and the handling of the port's business in the latter. There are a few other streets stretching toward the wooded and flat hinterland, all grass-grown and most of them shaded by orderly rows of uruca trees. The narrow-gauge railroad that goes to Managua, the capital, meanders up one of these streets; it is a very dejected and uncertain little transportation enterprise, with a couple of antediluvian wood-burning locomotives, rusted rails of the vintage of 1880, and ties that have taken root. However, progress is in the offing for that railroad. A 50,000-gallon oil tank, for fuel oil, was partially constructed when we were there, said to have cost some \$40,000. Nothing was being done upon it, and it was said to have been in its *status quo* for many months, with prospect of many more. And

it would be a little difficult to surmise just what could be done with oil, supposing the tank ready for it, until new locomotives and other expensive appurtenances had been added to the road's equipment.

The first thing I did in Corinto was to try my hand at money changing. It was an eminently successful venture. I started with one American dollar; in ten minutes I had sixteen Nicaraguan *billetes*. Nor am I a J. Rufus Wallingford. It was simply the rate of change—16 to 1. It must be quite satisfactory to live where it is always possible to have pockets full of bills, even if they are very dirty ones. A few years ago the exchange rate fell from 20 to 12 in three days, which indicates that to be a successful financier in Nicaragua requires both courage and activity.

When we were there the United States Government was in temporary charge of the customs collections in Nicaragua. Our steamer landed a large gentleman, with a white collar and a red tie, who was to manage that Corinto custom-house for Uncle Sam. It was his ambition to place the Corinto system on a par with that of New York. Poor little Corinto—as if one New

York custom-house was not enough for the entire universe!

The gentleman in question was bursting with energy and enthusiasm. He had never been in the Tropics before.

"Things are going to move here. Believe me!"

That was the essence of his comment after his first glimpse of the lackadaisical system in vogue. When we last saw him he was actually *running* and disported a fresh starched collar.

"I will bet you five gold dollars," said the mate, "that when we strike Corinto on the down trip our friend will have come to earth. I'll bet that no one in Corinto ever sees him go faster than a reasonable Central American walk after the first week. Did you see the natives look at him and smile?"

I had noticed them and did n't take the wager.

Corinto celebrated Christmas, and we tried to. I think Corinto was more satisfied with its performance than we were. Certainly the little town made a strenuous effort, what with band music, which was miserable in comparison with the excellent music of Costa Rica, and a general fiesta.

It seems wrong to spend Christmas on a Pacific

Mail liner in mid-tropics. Think of sitting all day under the deck awnings, with the alternative of looking out over the breezeless water or of looking out over the breezeless land, in the meantime thinking and talking of Christmas time in the States; of snow flurries, skating, stuffed turkey, and cranberries! It makes one very lonely and patriotic and hungry for "God's country"; and in the meantime that little chunk of ice perspires into oblivion and you wake from your tropical yule tide reverie to find the limeade uncomfortably lukewarm.

There was some genuine Christmas fun, though.

A cable message that came to the chief engineer supplied most of it. It was from his home in San Francisco, where he spent a week every seventy days or so, and told him that a Christmas present had arrived in the form of a girl baby. So of course the chief was happy, and grinned appreciatively when some women passengers presented him with an elaborate assortment of gifts, created on the spur of the moment with much originality and a deal of unique workmanship. What with the impromptu presents, the happiness of the chief, and a case of champagne that the purser dug up for the occasion, there was merriment galore.

That night, as I chanced forward on the lower deck, I spied the new "dad," whom the ship had christened "Father Mooney," reading with very evident glee a verse we had concocted in his honour. Truth to tell, it was pathetically little that the good-natured engineer got from his Christmas and the gift it had brought him in the far-away northland; it is n't pleasant to wrestle with antiquated boilers, Mexican coal passers, and heat-sick stokers on a craft whose youth lies far back in the eighties, month in and month out, up and down the west coast, with home and Christmas babies two thousand miles away.

So perhaps the chief was forgivable for swearing softly between grins, as he re-read "Father Mooney" in his stuffy stateroom under the flickering draft of the electric fan.

The chief he got a cable
At Corinto, Christmas morn,
Bringing him a message
That he 'd been wanting long.
An' when he read its contents
His grin went clear aroun'—
For Chief he 's got a present
Way up in Frisco town.

It 's true she 's not almighty big
And she has n't any name—
But Chief he 's "Father Mooney" now
And he 'll never be the same.

"Dear Dad," the new Miss Mooney wired
The minute she was made,
"I 'm off the ways an' floating now,
So don't you be afraid.
My engines are the latest,
My boiler 's coppered 'round,
My speed is something awful
An' my tonnage is nine pound.
So I wish you Merry Christmas,
An' hope, does Ma and me,
That Captain 'll give the jingle
So you 'll hurry home from sea."

CHAPTER VIII

Nicaragua and Honduras



NICARAGUA and Honduras are abjectly "down and out," economically, politically, and morally. Their notorious condition has too often been quoted as an example of Central America as a whole, which is eminently unfair.

Costa Rica and Salvador, for instance, are in an almost totally different sphere, for both are comparatively prosperous, mildly enterprising and decidedly stable. As to Guatemala, it is infinitely rich, so far as God has had to do with its equipment, and infinitely despoiled by a vicious governmental system, whose paramount characteristics are graft and oppression. But there is hope for Guatemala; even a cursory acquaintance impresses that fact. Concerning Nicaragua and Honduras, information leads down a sadly blind alley as regards the future; they represent the big problem of Central America, with which some one, sometime, must grapple,

and which can never be solved or cured, even partially, in any brief space of time or by any one single act of intervention or policy, be it of "dollar diplomacy" or of some more forceful variety. More on that head later, however.

On the steamer I asked a shifty-eyed son of the southland, who would have made an estimable villain on the stage and doubtless was an inestimable one off it, what was the difference between a revolutionist and a patriot.

"Ah, Señor, that is easy," was his grinning response. "A patriot is one who rebels and wins. The others we call revolutionists."

Whatever the accuracy of the definition, it is certain that there have been patriots and revolutionists a-plenty in poor Nicaragua. Its political history—it has little of any other kind—is vastly complicated, and really can be reduced to one almost continuous performance of governmental handsprings, in which the "Ins" and the "Outs" have succeeded each other to power with bewildering rapidity. In fact, president *pro tem* seems the only really appropriate title for the chief executive.

José Santos Zelaya is the picturesque figure who dominates modern Nicaragua's story. He founded,

and conducted, an atrocious system of politics, finance, and morals, whose net result to his country when he quit it in 1909 was political, financial, and moral destitution. The dictator himself won a fortune and the richly-merited title of the "Un-speakable Zelaya."

But Nicaraguan history began long before the dark ages of Zelayaism. In 1522, the country was officially "conquered" by Davila, who baptised natives by the wholesale and incidentally acquired from them a prodigious amount of gold. Thereafter for several centuries Nicaragua received further baptism of fire and sword at the hands of warring Spanish factions, under the guidance of fortune-seeking *conquistadores*. In 1822, when the Spanish dominion over Central America was shaken off, it is estimated that Nicaragua possessed probably 200,000 population; thirty years later one fourth of that number remained. An instructive commentary upon the state of affairs that contributed to the depopulation is contained in an historical estimate of Manuel Antonio de la Cerda, the first Chief of State, of whom it is related that he "was very similar to many of the feudal barons of the Middle Ages. He would smile pleasantly

when the ears of his enemies were presented to him, strung upon the blade of a sword." Statesmanship of that sanguine order, any one will admit, is not conducive to universal peace and plenty.

In 1851, and thereafter at intervals up to the time of the final determination in favour of the Panama route, Nicaragua came to the fore as a possible location for, at first, a trans-isthmian trade route and later for a canal. In the earlier years when Californian migration made travel heavy and profitable, a laborious route was maintained across southern Nicaragua, embracing an inland sail upon the water of Lake Nicaragua. The later ramifications of the canal dispute and its final adjustment are rather too complex to be touched upon here. Suffice to say that in 1902, as every one knows, Panama was chosen for the canal route, and the last hopes poor Nicaragua entertained of economic development in this direction went glimmering.

Then there was the Walker expedition affair. That in itself deserves a chapter, instead of a tabloid reduction; however, this is not history, but a collection of travel impressions, to which an incidental background of historical fact may

lend interest, as its study did for us as we formed them.

Early in the fifties one of the chronic revolutions broke out, after Nicaragua had withdrawn from the Central American Union and declared itself a republic with a president and most of the other appurtenances of republicanism. This time Honduras aided the revolutionists, who laid siege to the city of Granada, which was sacked after an eight months' resistance. Thereafter William Walker appeared on the scene. The story of his unique and turbulent Central American career is well told in the following paragraphs from Frederick Palmer's *Central America*.

"Shortly before the raising of the siege Byron Cole, an American, had arranged with . . . the revolutionists for the services of three hundred Americans for military duty under the guise of a colonisation grant. . . .

"On the strength of this, William Walker, with fifty-six Americans, arrived in June, 1855. . . . With the addition of one hundred natives, he marched against the town of Rivas, but was repulsed. . . . Six weeks later he captured Granada and made a treaty with the *legitimista* commander.

Patricio Rivas was made provisional President and Walker commander-in-chief of the army. Everything was done to encourage the immigration of Americans from California until, early in 1856, there were some twelve hundred Americans capable of bearing arms in the country.

"From the first Costa Rica was hostile to the influx of Americans, and in March, 1856, declared war against Nicaragua and the 'filibusters.' Walker at once despatched four companies of American, French, and German soldiers to Costa Rica, where they were defeated. . . . Meanwhile a provisional government was declared by Walker, and at the election held soon after he was chosen President and inaugurated at Granada on July 13, 1856.

"Three months later Guatemalan and Salvadorian troops occupied northern Nicaragua, attacked Granada, and were joined later by Costa Rica and Honduras. Walker's men were hard pressed and his losses so heavy that in December, unable to hold Granada, which he had retaken, he destroyed it. . . . Walker saw the futility of further resistance and, sending for General Mora, brother of the President of Costa Rica, who was in

command of the allied forces, he agreed to surrender to Commander Davis, of the American sloop-of-war *St. Mary's*, which had been lying at San Juan del Sur since early in February. . . . On May 1, 1857, Walker and his officers marched out of the town of Rivas with their side arms and embarked on the *St. Mary's*, followed by four hundred of their men. All were taken to the United States."

Some months later, during a bitter revolutionary complication that followed on the heels of Walker's eviction from Nicaragua, he thought he saw an opportunity to regain power there, and, evading the United States Government, landed at San Juan del Norte, and there he was seized again, and sent home. But he intended to subjugate Central America, did Walker, and with burr-like persistence came back again, this time to Honduras, in 1860, where he was taken by the British and turned over to General Alvarez, head of the army of Honduras. After a court-martial, he was sentenced and shot on September 12, 1860.

Early in the eighties Zelaya appeared. After an education abroad he returned to his native land and speedily was obliged to leave it to save his neck, thanks to unbridled criticisms of the admin-

istration. Thereupon he went to Guatemala, where he received military and political education at the hands of Barrios, its able dictator. Next he helped depose a Salvadorian president. In 1893, he was chosen to head a faction in a revolution in his homeland, and after defeating Joaquin Zavala, the President, he had himself appointed President, as a reward of virtue.

I have referred to Zelaya as the "unspeakable." He is also called the "Lion of Central America." After all, everything in life depends on the point of view, and what one calls Zelaya depends simply on which side of the fence one happens to be. Those whom he had rewarded in one way or another, used the latter title; others preferred the former.

Zelaya had a sense of humour, says Palmer, and enjoyed the farces of his reelection. In Guatemala to-day Cabrera is "chosen" by the people every four years in a similar way, but the humorous side of the proceedings does n't seem to appeal to the grim little man whom his loving people have narrowly missed killing on at least three occasions.

The Nicaraguan "president" grew fat on monopolies, most profitable of which was that on liquor,

with tobacco and oil close seconds. Concessions of every conceivable and inconceivable kind were developed and sold with an amazing commercial ingenuity. In fact, everything possible was wrung dry, including national morality. It is said to have been one of Zelaya's boasts that he was the father of forty-five children, while according to his own figures over half of the population was of illegitimate birth.

Finally, after a period of administrative debauchery, in December of 1909, Zelaya turned the threadbare reins of government over to Madris, who in turn was ousted in September of 1910, being succeeded by Estrada, who was superseded by Diaz in May, 1911.

When we were in Corinto, Nicaragua was recuperating from its last disturbance and preparing for the next, which burst into being a few months later, in the summer of 1912.

We failed to take the trip to Managua, the scheduled steamer sailing date giving too little leeway, and instead perspired in Corinto, languidly enjoying the limited but unique society, watching volcanic Momotombo smoke heavenward, and bargaining with the one bumboat woman, a privi-

leged character who is said to have plied her trade there for twenty years. If that is true, she is by all odds the most stable institution in the country.

I doubt if any one on board fretted at the Christmas time delay at Corinto more than did Captain K., notwithstanding the fact that a dozen years of Central American experience should have made him immune. Every one on the Pacific Mail—and there are some able young officers as well as some irascible boors as barnacled and antediluvian as the ships themselves—seems to wish he were somewhere else. That “somewhere” almost invariably is the “China run.” Every one wants to be transferred, and each officer secretly cherishes the hope that soon he will find himself on the magnificent trans-Pacific liners instead of grinding out the tropical schedule with its host of difficulties and delays.

A chief engineer has special troubles. Coal at the southern ports is vastly expensive.

“If I get to Frisco with more than three days’ coal supply, there’s all kinds of trouble,” said one of them, “and if we go short and have to put in to San Diego, there’s a worse row and I have to write a report telling just how it happened.”

There were three young American ladies on board, each with a little baby. All three were going "home" to Honduras, getting off at Amapala, whence they went by mule-back a hundred miles or so into the mountains to the great Rosario mines operated by an American syndicate at San Jacinto. Their husbands were employed there, and were waiting, through the Christmas time, at Amapala, while the *Acapulco* dawdled at Corinto. Only one of the fathers had seen his child, for the other two women had left the uncivilised bush of the Honduran mining camp for their homes in New England to give birth to their babies. So naturally there was a wonderful amount of impatience on the *Acapulco*.

And what a time when we finally reached Amapala on the 28th! The three husbands were there—had been there for ten days, with their pack outfit and a veritable caravan of animals and natives. Before the anchor was down their launch was beside the ship, and up the gangway they tumbled, big bronzed fellows, in clothing originally white but now reminiscent of the long trail, their legs in puttees and their faces shaded by pith helmets.

And what happened first, even before the expected kiss? Well, it was feminine, truly enough. One girl—with a babe who had never seen its father, whom she herself had not seen for eight months—burst out crying, half hysterically, more than half angrily. Why? Because her hubby had ventured to grow a mustache since she left him and *had never written about it!*

We had dared the mothers to mix the babies—exchange them—just to have the fun of seeing the wrong father enthuse over the right baby, or however you choose to put it. But they lost their courage at the last moment, and, as the mate expressed it, “called it a misdeal and shuffled all over again.”

However, the men contributed a unique wager to add to the festivity of the occasion. They made a bet; a sort of pool on their respective baby's disposition. Each father put up five dollars, and the fifteen was to go to the mother of the *baby that cried last!*

“Talk about a sporting proposition! That's a world beater—and no chance to stack the cards,” was the enthusiastic comment of a Yankee engineer who was bound north with a Panamanian bride

and the remnants of intermittent fever clinging to him.

Before the launch was out of sight a frenzied baby wowl told us that at least one entry was out of the running, but it was not until two months later that a belated letter from the mines disclosed the identity of the winner.

It was a little story in itself, that meeting in the hot harbour of Amapala. Four days of riding lay before them, and it was all riding, for the trail permitted the passage of nothing with wheels. Every foot of the way the babies would be carried in their go-carts, swung on a pole between two *mozos*, the indefatigable barefoot men to whom leagues of flinty roads mean nothing. It was funny to picture those natty little carts swinging along the dusty trails in the Honduran mountains. The stopping places would be unmentionable. As for food, they carried that, and would do their own cooking. At the end of the ride lay the big camp, with a couple of thousand native labourers, a score of white men, and five white women. Mail came in once in two weeks, and then it was months old.

So there was real pathos in bidding good-bye to

these women who were going into the bush for a couple of years of social desolation. Their husbands are of the real pioneer-hero type of to-day, and they themselves—well, no Molly Stark was more heroic than are such as they!

CHAPTER IX

Enter Salvador



THE first we saw of Acajutla, chief seaport of Salvador, was the lighthouse that stands on the end of a jutting point. That lighthouse, by the way, is unique, for according to the mate, it is the only one along the entire Central American coast that is regularly lit. However, the compensating feature, from the standpoint of inefficiency, is that the beacon is so well surrounded by thick trees as to be invisible from certain quarters.

It was three in the afternoon when we anchored perhaps a mile from the surf line, for here, as at most of the other "ports" there is no harbour at all, but simply an open roadstead. It was three, I have said. A train was supposed to go to Sonsonate at five. The captain and purser swore by all they held holy that we could catch that train and that we must go ashore in the first lighter. This we firmly refused to do, an English traveller

tourist and a German commercial traveller joining in our protest. The little German, I remember, was specially vociferous in his objection. Later it developed why—he had once been obliged to spend a night at Acajutla, and had no intention of repeating the experience.

So we stuck, despite the sour face of the purser. It was never easy to understand why they should have made such a fuss; even as it was, each one of us was obliged to pay for our extra night's lodging, and handsomely.

Acajutla is extremely businesslike. There is little to the port but the iron wharf, a railroad station, a couple of office buildings, a hotel, and an indefinite crescent of beach, with a clutter of native huts behind it. But everything is impressively active and almost systematised. The answer is found in the fact that an English corporation owns and manages the railroad.

Sonsonate is an hour's run from Acajutla, over the flat coastal plain. There we found Señor Lindo, who entertained us pleasantly during the two hours the train lingered, and then sent us on to San Salvador equipped with some welcomed introductions.

Señor Lindo was responsible for our coming to San Salvador. We had met him and his frail, attractive wife on the steamer en route from New York to Colon, and his enthusiasm for his native land had filled us with the conviction that a Central American tour that did not include Salvador would be like visiting Paris and omitting the Louvre.

Once I entertained the notion that "boosters"—the real triple-expansion, self-starting kind—were a *genus homo* restricted in their haunts to that part of the United States that has the good fortune of lying west of the Rocky Mountains. And if any one had told me that a *Central American* could be a dyed-in-the-wool booster it would have seemed absurd.

Now I know better. Señor Lindo is the reason for my conversion; at least he is the most pronounced reason. The Pacific Coast has no monopoly of local patriotism, unless the "Coast" be extended all the way to Panama, which it rightfully should.

Señor Lindo has two obsessions. One is his enthusiasm for his country, and the other is his bitter dislike for the Pacific Mail. Curiously

enough, both of these states of mind are almost national in Salvador, while the latter is quite chronic all up and down the coast, which is not unnatural when it is remembered that the Pacific Mail offers practically the beginning and the end of transportation possibilities.

The ride up from the coast to San Salvador does not compare at all in beauty with that from Puntarenas to San José. The country is dry and hot, and hilly enough to shut out broad vistas, yet so tame as to lack all real picturesqueness. There is little or no timber and a very thick population. A moderate prosperity seems quite general.

Upon emerging from the dusty railroad carriage your name is taken by a uniformed gentleman at the San Salvador station, and that apparently marks the beginning and the end of any governmental surveillance so far as travellers are concerned. There were comfortable large carriages for the drive to the Nuevo Mondo Hotel—the “New World” hotel—the town’s one real hostelry. The streets of San Salvador are paved roughly with cobbles, and are more clean than dirty. For the most part, the houses are low, and the store buildings of one story, usually with the character-

istic south-country 'dobe or plastered walls. The street cars are one of the city's real features. They are of the two-mule-power variety, tiny affairs in themselves but operating on very broad gauge tracts. The mules are driven at breakneck speed, all other traffic vacating the road when the drivers came whooping along, yelling at their animals and brandishing cruel looking whips, which fortunately seem more for effect than actual use.

The proprietor of the Nuevo Mondo speaks English excellently; his name is Señor Alexander Porth. In appearance he resembles a German, in manners a Spanish grandee, and in business acumen a Rockefeller. Our room was a big affair facing the street, one story beneath, with two melodramatic balconies fit for any Romeo, a ceiling full fifteen feet high, and two beds with iron frames and some stray inhabitants unworthy of mention in a sober chronicle.

We paid six dollars silver a day, each, or about \$2.50 gold, which was extremely high for Central America; but the proprietor naïvely explained that as it was getting to be the height of the travelling season and all his rooms would be full anyway, there was no reason why he should

make any inducements to keep tourists with him.

"There is no other hotel where you can go," was the finale of his little discourse, delivered with a telling shrug of his fat shoulders.

During the six-hour train ride such a vast amount of Salvadorian terra firma had accumulated about my person that as soon as we were installed at the Nuevo Mondo I made overtures for a bath. So dirty was I that even my lack of Spanish did not prevent the *mozo* from comprehending what I needed.

Equipped with a bath towel that had been dug up somewhere I was led down-stairs and into an alcove off the little central courtyard—a patio shaded picturesquely by a tangled mass of foliage and vines suspended from orange, banana, alligator pear, and bamboo trees. It appeared that the gentlemen's shower was in use; would I object to cleansing myself in the bathing place reserved for the señoras? Assuredly I would not, I assented, provided none of the fair sex interfered.

So I was ushered into a dark and cavernous hole and left to my own devices, the *mozo* politely insinuating that from this point on my ablutions

must be personally conducted, so to speak. The sound of gently falling water came from the distant corner of the sombre apartment; over an eight-foot partition there filtered just enough light to deceive one into thinking that it was possible to see your hand before your face, which it was n't. I have read in the best detective stories that the right thing to do under such circumstances is to stand perfectly still until your eyes become accustomed to the dimness. Of course then, in the stories, the malicious machinations of the villain become visible and the final clue necessary to free the fair damsel or win the treasure is apparent. So I stood still, tenderly clasping the bath towel, praying that no señoras would seek to investigate what interloper was intruding upon their reservations, and awaiting the revelation, as stoically, I venture to believe, as William Gillette playing Sherlock Holmes ever could have contrived under equally trying circumstances.

After a time, when it was possible to distinguish objects somewhat, I ventured to explore. Gingerly and little by little I established the topography of the bath-room. A huge tub, probably about four by nine feet, and three feet high, was built

up from the concrete floor. A tiny tap at the darkest end gave forth a proportionately tiny jet of water. In the midst of the gloom there was a lone chair. At the side of the tub there was a tin pan; I divined that this was the "shower" feature of the bath, gravity and the pan doing the work. Then, disrobing, I prepared to bathe.

But there was no soap. I needed soap, and needed it badly. First I made a careful investigation, crawling on my hands and knees throughout the gloom and feeling in every possible and impossible place where an article like a piece of soap might have located itself. Discouragement alone rewarded me.

Shielding myself with the bath towel as thoroughly as its meagre proportions permitted, I sallied forth, with fear and trepidation. Mind you, I was in the *señoras'* quarters, and it required courage to face the bright outer light clad in only a towel.

"*Mozo*," I called softly. "*Mozo*, bring hither some soap."

Echo answered echo. But I didn't want echoes. I wanted soap.

I tried whistling. Apparently there was not

a *mozo* within earshot. Casting discretion to the winds (but retaining the bath towel!) I sallied forth still farther, out into the very passageway beside the patio. No sooner had I reached it than a gentle swish of skirts sounded in my terror-stricken ears. With a fearful slide, I regained the safe recesses of the tub room, and there waited, listening, until the feminine sounds had disappeared, thanking my stars that the particular lady in question had not desired a bath. For to have had a Spanish-speaking dame thrust in upon me would have complicated the already too-complicated affair beyond the powers of endurance.

Finally, after another campaign of calling, a boy appeared.

"Soap," said I, in what I hoped would be both a lucid and winning manner.

He regarded me blankly, and then launched into a torrent of words with his conversational clutch thrown wide open. It was a dead lock. At last, after I had resorted to a sign-language picture of the application of the desired article, the truth dawned upon him and he departed to return anon with the long-sought soap, after which all was happy.



Not a Turkish mosque, but a scene in Sonsonate, Salvador

Salvador is supremely proud of two things. The first is its prosperity. The second is that Johnny Moissant, the aviator who was killed at New Orleans a couple of years ago, once lived in Salvador. The reflected fame of the Moissant residence will never be cast off the little country's shoulders. A matter in connection with the famous man's residence in the little republic which seems to have been forgotten and forgiven, is that he once led a rather promising revolution. The story says that his forces captured the Pacific coast sections, including the town of Sonsonate, where a "loan" was negotiated from a bank, a due bill for \$200,000 being given the institution, with the honour and respect for business detail characteristic of such affairs. When the rebels finally were routed just what became of that due bill is not recorded.

We were sitting in the Cathedral plaza when the gentleman who had transported our trunk from the depot appeared. He was immaculately attired and politeness itself. He delivered a flowery Castilian speech; its import evidently was that when we had the misfortune to leave the hospitable city we were urged again to entrust the transportation of our goods to his able hands.

"Trusting that you will always remain the same, *adios*, my very dear friend," was the unique rhetorical jewel with which he closed his discourse. Whereat he tipped his hat, shook hands all round, and retired in the most gallant fashion. All of which illustrates the fact that a drayman is a polished gentleman in Spanish land—which he is not apt to be in Old New York.

Later, we had another funny experience in the same park, a trifle more embarrassing. While I was taking photographs of the really excellent statuary, we chanced to smile upon a couple of ragamuffin youngsters who were watching operations and invited them to get into the picture. They needed no urging. In fact, seeing what was going on, every small boy and girl in range came running up, until at least fifty had gathered. All well and good for that particular picture, but when we started to walk away in search of other views, the whole army followed at our heels, yelling like little fiends.

We tried to shake them in as dignified a manner as the situation permitted, but with little success, and finally were forced into ignominious retreat from the park, walking down endless streets, ap-



Outside the *Mercado*, San Salvador



In Dueñas Plaza, San Salvador—statuary, the ever-present band-stand, and the ragamuffins who later became a pest

parently on our way somewhere or other. At length the mob wearied of the pursuit of the tall Gringos, and we were left to our own devices. Later I crept back to that park as if I were a criminal eluding spies, and got the desired photographs, unseen by the human pests.

It was in Dueñas Plaza, where our difficulty with San Salvador's youth occurred, that there is a really imposing bit of statuary, a bronze and marble monument some fifty feet high, with a winged Glory on top and at the base Liberty, with the busts of Delgado, Arce, and Rodriguez, and the national coat of arms. It commemorates Salvador's declaration of independence from the Mexican dominion, and was dedicated on November 5, 1911, one hundred years after the inauguration of the struggle that resulted in the independence of Salvador, under the leadership of the three patriots above named.

In parks San Salvador is delightfully equipped. There seem to be a dozen of them worthy of the name, and six chief ones, all well kept and beautiful. Of course, in each one there is a band-stand, for the band concerts are the beginning and end of public amusement in the Spanish-American

countries, and the band-stand is the local reproduction of our own Coney Islands, Central Parks, and Metropolitan Opera Houses rolled into one inclusive and satisfying whole. The bands are remarkably good and their music excellent; no American park audience would have the good taste to appreciate the high class selections played here, when even the barefoot listener is an inborn musical critic, and an appreciative one at that.

We were in San Salvador on New Year's day, but apparently little was made of this holiday except in the way of some private entertainments, at least one large dance being given. However, the Nuevo Mondo was treated to its share of New Year's hilarity by a group of Germans who tortured the piano and every one within earshot until daylight drove them to bed. German national songs, hymns, and collegiate melodies are good to listen to at times, but hard on the audience when the volunteers are considerably more than half seas under, and the time of rendering is from midnight to dawn.

The market is by far the most interesting and picturesque feature of Salvador's capital, and, like the circus of our short-trousers days,



"In parks and statuary Salvador is delightfully equipped "



"The national palace is the show building of the city."
Hotel Nuevo Mundo in background

it is the "biggest and the best" to be found in Central America, we were told. According to the Britisher just up from South America, it is better than anything he encountered in a year's travel in that land.

Looking down from our balcony at the Hotel Nuevo Mondo early Sunday morning, one sees an endless procession of women, with baskets on their heads, streaming past and turning up from the Cathedral plaza in front of the *Palacio Nacional*. Across the plaza, emerging from the converging streets, there are similar streams of women, all with baskets, empty or full, dependent upon whether they are merchants or prospective purchasers, and all clad in shawls of vivid hue, most of them barefooted and all bareheaded. Such a sight is not restricted to Sunday. Only Sundays and holidays happen to bring out the biggest crowds, and then the introduction to the quaint *Mercado* is the best.

Watch these women for a few minutes. The rainbow colouring of their shawls and dresses is enough reward, as they file along between the low, tinted walls of the houses, almost invariably choosing the rough cobbles of the middle of the

street in preference to the smooth sidewalks, where they and their broad burdens may be interfered with by other passers-by. Their baskets are broad and flat and woven of coarse native grass or wicker, measuring from twenty to thirty-six inches in diameter. The women do all the work, one very rarely seeing a man carrying a burden, the extent of masculine labour apparently being the prodding of the oxen who loaf along with the little two-wheel carts. Here, by the way, the wheels mostly have spokes and are not made solidly, as in Costa Rica.

Some of the burdens the women carry are tremendous. In weight they often reach one hundred pounds, and this, spread out on a flat basket, balanced to a hair breadth while the bearer walks in bare feet over rough cobbles. No wonder that all the women have backs as straight as ramrods!

The conglomeration of burdens is as interesting as their size. For example, we saw one hag trudging along with a veritable variety store stock on her head; in her big flat basket were a dozen large bunches of watercress, eight eggs on a plate, a good-sized jug of milk, two *tamales*, two or three *zapotes*, a massive chunk of meat, and a collection



The streets are more popular than the sidewalks



A street in San Salvador

of unknown vegetables. At her breast was a nursing baby, and behind her straggled another infant tagging at her scanty skirt. Doubtless *paterfamilias* was at home, enjoying his Sabbath smoke.

That was no very uncommon sight. We simply had opportunity to tabulate her cargo as the lady passed beneath our balcony. Eggs are carried with nonchalance, big platters and urns of milk and other strange-looking liquids are borne aloft with easy grace, doves sit on top of the piled up baskets as their mistresses walk along, and are too common sights to provoke comment. And nothing ever falls; even in the markets themselves, where the narrow passages are crowded with basket bearers, there appear to be no collisions and no accidents.

The markets are behind the palace. There are several of them, all roofed and walled in, with hundreds of booths separated by narrow aisles, up and down which surges a mass of womenfolk, either poor people buying for themselves, or the servants of the rich making purchases for their mistresses.

Two buildings are devoted to cooked stuffs.

Better, they are used for cooking. Huge places they are, measuring probably 75 by 200 feet. The air is full of charcoal and wood smoke from the scores of little fires beneath the earthenware pots and pans, which are set upon stones or scraps of corrugated iron. Apparently everything imaginable is cooking. Meat, of course, for they are tremendous meat eaters, all these people, from the élite at the Hotel Nuevo Mondo, to the poorest of the poor heating up their scraps at the curb. Coffee, too, there is in plenty. Doubtless it is as cheap as water. Some *chefs* are making *tortillas*, and others are presiding over countless pots of *frijoles*, for beans are the backbone of the native diet. Here and there a platter full of plantains sizzles in grease, until they turn to a delicious brown and are fished out by hardened and dirty fingers and skilfully placed in corn husks or upon green leaves. They are as good as they look and smell (and their odour is ambrosial), are these fried bananas, if one has the courage to disregard their environment. Also, there are *tamales* of several kinds and appearances and indigestibility.

Here, as elsewhere in the markets, is a revel of colour, a seemingly continual good humour, and



A "delivery waggon," Central America

an all-pervading odour that is indescribable—call it an olfactory epic and be satisfied.

In the other buildings there must be nearly 500 saleswomen, and all busy. Apparently all of San Salvador does all of its food purchasing in the market every day. There are no “departments,” no “floor walkers,” no cash registers, and no system. Every miniature merchant is for herself, and the devil take the hindmost—a state of affairs which gives the purchasing public the advantages of a spirited competition.

The vendors of earthenware are perhaps as picturesque as any, as they sit on the floor in the midst of their brown jugs and plates and platters, bargaining vociferously over a two-cent purchase. The native Indian work in this line is excellent, and the price of really attractive things is infinitesimal. Of course, it is all hand work, and as the labourers get about twelve cents a day plus their *frijoles*, the price of their products is upon a corresponding scale.

In one corner grimy hags sell charcoal, which comes to market upon the backs of mules or drawn in the lumbering ox-carts. Sugar is vended from big gourds; the purchaser scrapes off a handful,

some of which she tastes and the rest throws back. It is scarcely hygienic, but it is a mighty satisfactory way of ascertaining the quality of what one buys. Then, if a price mutually agreeable has been arrived at, the saleslady holds up her scales and does the weighing. This consists in placing a metal or stone weight in one hollowed gourd which is hung from a stick balanced on the saleswoman's finger; at the opposite end of the stick is another gourd receptacle, in which is placed the sugar until a balance is effected, and the stick is horizontal. Then the buyer takes her purchase. She either wraps it in a banana leaf or simply dumps it in her basket, along with the half dozen other articles already there. The seller never wraps up her goods when sold, for that is the affair of the purchaser.

The meats make the least agreeable display. They are apt to be shredded, and one suspects that they are still warm. Every morning between six and seven the big hearse-like ox-carts bring the meat to the markets. The carts are metal-lined, tightly covered and divided into compartments, and are painted a vivid indigo blue. In them the meat, brought directly from the govern-

mentally-inspected slaughter-houses, is packed promiscuously, layer after layer. Before the sun is more than up, the blue carts are at the market door, ready for the women, as usual, to do the lifting and carrying. They stand at the side of the carts and have their baskets loaded until it is just possible to stagger under the weight; literally, every pound of the heavy, bloody meat that can be crowded upon their wide baskets is piled up, making immense burdens, borne in some incomprehensible way by the sinewy little women.

There is a "curb market" also, not as extensive as the interior ones, but at least with the advantage of better ventilation, a matter of some moment. Cold, cool, and hot drinks are for sale by most of the curb merchants, usually displayed in big gourds. Also, there are cigars and cigarettes of every description and blackness and price. Judging from the appearance of the barefoot customers, I should say that there are more "ten-for's" than "two-for's."

The scavengers are the buzzards, ably aided by an ever-roaming canine army, for there seem to be more dogs than beggars in San Salvador, the latter being agreeably noticeable because of their absence.

The street-cleaning department, although archaic, is certainly picturesque. A couple of men turn on hydrants along the curb, which drain into sluice-boxes, and from these they throw the water out over the streets with pails. This lays the dust somewhat and the sweepers then get in their good work, armed with huge witches' brooms, made of twigs, with which they perform upon the cobbles in a manner that would do credit to a Dutch housewife.

The national palace is the show building of the city, occupying an entire block, facing the Cathedral plaza. Externally, it is built in excellent taste, a replica, I understand, of some classic palace in Spain. A colonnade of well proportioned columns forms the main entrance from the park.

Within, the palace, which is really nothing more than the office building of the government, is built about a large open court. The building is not yet completed. Some will tell you that the entire affair cost six million dollars, silver; others, equally positive, state that the outlay was four millions. The truth of the matter seems to be that no one knows exactly what it did cost. Also, many who have watched its erection say very



An Indian type, not characteristic of Spanish beauty



"The street-cleaning department performs upon the cobbles in a manner that would do credit to a Dutch housewife"

openly that the contractors made a fabulous profit. That seems to be the order of the day—foreign contractors milking local treasuries, with generous rake-offs for the officialdom at the helm. In nearly every room was a picture of the President, Dr. Manuel Enrique Araujo, a gentleman, by the way, apparently uniquely noted for his integrity and public spirit.

One afternoon we took a two-mule-power car and went out to the *Finca Modela*, a pretty little park some twenty minutes' ride from the centre of the city, where there is an artificial lake, pleasant gardens, a tiny museum, and a place, where it is possible (though far from advisable) to get abominable soft drinks. The feature of the trip is the hair-raising manner in which the little street cars go around right-angled corners, the mules at full gallop. Why the cars never leave the track is one of the unsolved Salvadorian mysteries.

No, that is n't really the feature, either. In reminiscing upon things Central American, one is too apt to overdraw the minor matters that at the time seemed amusing or ludicrous, perhaps only because one judged them—quite unfairly—by the entirely different standards of the northland. It

is an unfortunate habit. Frankly, we are unfair. The feature of San Salvador, then, was not its diminutive street cars, its barefoot women, and its funny little ways. The feature of San Salvador, and of all of El Salvador, and the surprise of it, is *its positive delight as a place to visit*.

El Salvador's interests are not commanding, it is true; as an American resident expressed it, it is a "soft pedal country." But its native population is unique and picturesque, its scenery is attractive, and its winter climate perfection. Above all, the uninitiated should realise that it is an *easy land in which to travel*. Lack of Spanish is no serious drawback; the hotels are passable, and most of them even good; the rates are infinitesimal; the food excellent; there is no disorder or difficulty. Salvador we found a happy little land, well worth visiting; Costa Rica was the same; Guatemala proved a veritable treasure trove of interest, politically and economically an abomination, but by all odds the most fascinating area for healthy-minded and healthy-bodied sight-seekers that one can encounter on this western continent.

CHAPTER X

San Salvador



AN SALVADOR'S business activity seems to be chiefly in the hands of the Germans and Hebrews, most of the latter hailing from the United States. The capital city is the centre of trade for the entire country, and from it is conducted a very considerable wholesale and distributing business, which, judging from a casual observation, appears to be eminently profitable for those who have gained a foothold.

The little capital city has a pleasant "foreign colony," although the title is not entirely fitting, as most of those whom it would include are entirely absorbed in things Salvadorian, are old residents, and are as integral parts of the republic in every way, except perhaps politically, as it is possible to be. Some of these—and especially the Americans—have the advantage of perspective, with which goes the ability to comment interestingly

upon the conditions surrounding them. That much of the comment is sincere offsets the disadvantage that some of it is satire.

In the course of our stay we had many occasions to visit the Foreign Club, thanks to the hospitality of chance friends. The club itself, which stands opposite the Cathedral, is a magnificent place, quite outshining the Strangers' and University Clubs at Colon and Panama. From the street you pass through a grilled door into the one large room. The floor is tiled, the walls are coolly bare, and the finishings simple in design and colour. In the centre is a small garden, circular and perhaps twenty feet in diameter, down into which one steps from the room; above the garden there is no roof, so that the moon and stars look into the very heart of the building. Of course there is a bar, and billiard and card tables, not to mention a very well-equipped reading-room with a multitude of magazines of many countries. Altogether, it is a picture of luxury and tropical comfort.

There are some funny things about that club. For instance, it takes twelve blackballs to keep an applicant from membership, and there are only twenty-two voting members! Few, if any, of



Cathedral at San Salvador

the clubs of the world require more than three or four blackballs to prevent membership, a fact which I ventured to mention.

"Ah, but Salvador is different," explained Mine Host, a transplanted Yankee with a well-developed sense of humour. "You see, we all know each other here and—oh well, there is so little to do except stir up trouble! We started in with three blackballs. It was impossible to get new members; no one could get in, because at least three of the charter members hated every man suggested. We raised the limit to six, and still the club would not grow. Finally, it was made twelve, and we've increased our membership to one hundred and fifty."

My informant, who was a charter member, solemnly declared that he never could have got into the club in any other way than by being one of its founders.

At all events, the Foreign Club is a delightful place to sit of a starlit night, and drink pale green *crème de menthe* under the twinkling tropical sky in the tiny Italian garden, placed like a cool dark gem in the surrounding setting of gaily lighted room, where white-clad men loaf or play

or drink. (That last is poorly worded, for they drank no matter what else they did.)

One big whiskered man sat alone, a bit morosely. He, it seems, had made a contract with the government to deliver \$400,000 worth of cannon. The contract was closed; every one who had to be paid had been paid and the guns were on their way from Europe. Then suddenly the "powers that be" decided they would rather devote \$400,000 to other purposes than ordnance, and the whiskered gentleman was told that while it regretted the necessity the government did not see its way clear to take those cannon just at that time. Since then that gentleman with the \$400,000 cannon, the whiskers and an injured sense of justice has been alternately trying to make El Salvador take the ordnance, and suing it for damages. That he will succeed in gaining either end seems problematical. What hurt him most, our friend explained, was the recollection of the generous "greasing" he had administered to the hands of the very officialdom which later turned and blandly told him and his precious cannon to go to blazes, if the gossip of the hour was credible.

In the course of Foreign Club conversation, the

discussion meandered around to insects. Now perhaps *bugs* is not a refined topic, but at least in the southland it has the advantage of a diversified field from which to draw. Also, it may be amusing.

We had told of the multitudes of ants encountered at various times in our rooms, and of our Machiavellian schemes for their destruction. One, which was practised with great success, was to place a little sugar on the washstand, and when several regiments of ants and their nearest relatives had gathered for the feast, to sweep the entire community into a bucket of water. The only discouraging feature of the wholesale massacre was that it apparently made no impression upon the insect population.

"That 's nothing," said O., when we remarked that at Puntarenas it was necessary to keep the sugar bowl afloat. "Every night I go to bed at sea, so to speak, with the feet of the bed in jars of water. Before I caught on to the scheme it always made me feel as if I was intruding when I got under the sheets—there were so many there before me! And take this warning: Never hang up a suit of clothes if there is a spot of grease or

something edible on it; if you do the ants will eat the spot right out of the cloth. It's cleanly enough, but extravagant! But, really, those ants are a blessing, for they do more to keep things clean than anything else." Which reminded me of the spiders at San José, which no one killed because they exterminated other insects.

It appeared that the author of a certain book on Central America spent one night ashore at Salvador, making a flying trip to the capital and then returning to his steamer at Acajutla. Our friend, O., happened to meet him on the train.

"I made him red hot," said O., telling of the incident, which seemed to tickle him. He was curiously resentful of a man who would try to write authoritatively of a country after spending only one night in it. "You see, he started in to talk about the benefits of American industry and example down here; how a few Americans could increase the efficiency of the country a couple of thousand per cent., and all the rest of it. Then he asked me why Americans were not running the railroad; why they had native instead of American conductors.

"Now," continued O., "that made me a bit sore,

because I've heard that Yankee notion so many times, and I know just how it does n't work. Also, I happened to know a whole lot about the railroad. So I told him why conductors were n't Americans—because the company had 'fired' 'em, after they had conscientiously 'knocked down' an average of \$800 a month in fares. That made him mad. He said I was n't patriotic. But I could n't afford to be—I owned stock in the railroad, you see!"

That bustling little railroad is the *raison d'être* of most of Salvador's prosperity. It has one hundred miles of track, and also an annual subsidy of about \$9600 from the government. Besides the track and the subsidy, there are twelve locomotives, twenty-seven passenger coaches, and one hundred and sixty-eight freight cars, all, like the right of way, in good condition. In 1910, 264,000 passengers were carried and 70,000 tons of freight, of which 16,000 tons were coffee. When we were there, in 1911, the price of coffee was \$37, silver, and the planters were rejoicing; the previous year's figures had been \$32.

In 1899, the income of the railroad was \$3465; in 1900, \$40,000; in 1904, \$200,000; in 1908, \$500-

ooo, and in 1910, \$675,000. But its most interesting expansion is not on land, but at sea, for the company has three trim little ships of 1200 tons each, which fly the British flag and are designed for the trade of the small Central American ports, and for nothing else. They have special arrangements of hatches, and are light draught, so that they can come close to the wharves, and are quick to handle, being able to pinch out of tight places should occasion arise.

A quiet and interesting Englishman, of small stature and persistent temperament, is manager of the railroad company. His name is Spencer, and he has some decided notions regarding his business and its territory, which are both valuable and entertaining.

Among other things, he believes that those who expect great development of the western Central American ports after the opening of the Canal will be disappointed, and especially as regards the establishment of service with large steamers.

"Only on the Atlantic can large vessels be operated profitably," he told me. "It may be said that nothing under 5000 tons can make money on regular runs. Any good shipping man

will tell you that. On the Pacific, the reverse holds. Nothing over 1500 tons can operate profitably in a local business. At least, this applies to Central American ports. Take Acajutla, for instance, and San José, La Libertad, and the rest of them. From the end of the wharf at Acajutla there is nothing but Pacific Ocean to Australia. That means that even under the most ideal weather conditions there is a swell, and a swell means delay in lightering and more delay in loading and unloading lighters at the wharf.

“The local business all along the coast is a story of delay after delay. It is impossible that it should be otherwise. And a big ship cannot afford to be held up a day or two for a hundred tons of freight. At Acajutla, for instance, the very best record we can make is 500 tons of coffee loaded in a day. And that is the best we shall be able to do for a long time, because the amount of business does not, and will not, justify better facilities. The maximum unloaded is 150 tons. One reason is the extreme strictness of the customs examinations. Boxes and cases are opened, chiefly in the hope of discovering arms and ammunition.”

Later we heard an instance of this mania for

getting at the bottom of things on the part of customs officials. A small shipment of photographic films arrived, and in the course of examination more than half of the spools were *unwound*, to make sure that the rolls contained nothing they should not! Imagine the patriotic joy of that photographer when the exposed films were delivered.

One afternoon at his office, Mr. Spencer enlarged upon the future of the west-coast Central American trade, as he foresaw it. In passing, it should be remarked that many steamship men, including officials of the Pacific Mail, heartily disagree with him.

"We believe that in the Central American Pacific trade there will be only one solution—switch steamers. That is, little ships to handle the local trade. They will take the coffee to Panama and Salina Cruz, where they will load with the imports that will be left there by the big through steamers that cannot afford to make the stop-over local trips themselves.

"So we have built three ships and will build others if we find we are right. It takes them thirty-six hours to get to Salina Cruz. Another

twelve hours sees the coffee across the Tehuantepec railroad, and then the fast American-Hawaiian and other boats hurry it up to New York, or it goes to Hamburg. Yes, most of the coffee is going that way now; they simply can't handle the business at Panama. At least, they don't seem to care to try. I can't say that they deliberately hold it up, but it seems pretty near to that.

"Yes, the Tehuantepec may slide pretty fast after there is direct handling of east and west trade via Panama. Don't doubt it a bit. Then we will go to Panama. See why I call 'em switch steamers?"

Small vessels, small crews, and proper cargo arrangement to meet local conditions is the salvation of the local coasting problem, according to Mr. Spencer.

The *Acajutla*, the newest of the little Salvadorian fleet, had just been put into commission. She came from England under her own steam, and it may be remarked that a 16,000-mile sail is something of a feat for a 1200-ton steamer, loaded to the gun'els with coal.

"I met the captain at the pier and asked him up to have a cocktail," said Spencer, speaking of the arrival of the steamer.

When he saw the captain, Spencer's first question was: "How much coal have you got?" and that, with the cocktail, was the end of it.

A Salvadorian official was present and saw the quiet reception. Said he:

"You English certainly are the most extraordinary race created. To think of making no more fuss than that! If it had been a ship of ours that had made such a wonderful trip, we would have welcomed it with bands and dinners. A week would have been devoted to celebration. And you offer the captain a cocktail! An unfathomable race, indeed!"

Which illustrated admirably the difference between an Anglo-Saxon way of doing things and a Latin.

Remembering the story about the author and the American conductors, I asked Mr. Spencer how he found native labour; the road has only a dozen English or Americans in its employ. In answer, he suggested that I have a look in an average baggage car; later I did.

In a Salvadorian baggage car you can see everything imaginable. A woman sends a basket of eggs to her daughter up the line. The basket is

open, but no eggs are ever taken. Probably she explains to the conductor at the start that there are 132 eggs in that basket. And the conductor knows that when they reach their destination the daughter will count them. Also, he is aware that the company holds him personally responsible for their safe delivery. In those cars there are fighting cocks, tied in haphazard fashion to the nearest convenient object. Dogs and mules are sent around nonchalantly; open baskets of fruit and vegetables, furniture, everything and anything; and nothing is lost or stolen, for the native trainmen are honest so far as theft is concerned. But when there were "white men" on the work the company was swamped with claims, not to mention the fact that the conductors and agents pocketed all they could lay their hands on. Also, native labour is cheaper by several multiples than American.

A feature of the Salvadorian traffic that attracts the attention of the stranger is the transportation of mules. Every train has a mule car. The cavalier rides up to the station and buys tickets for himself and steed. Then the mule enters the car reserved for his kind, and the rider either

retires to the luxuries of the first-class carriage, if he be affluent, or climbs up on the top of the mule car, where he passes the time of day with his brothers until his destination is reached. It is no small mystery how they manage to keep their places on the top of that car, for the little trains jolt along at a goodly clip around the curves and up and down the sudden grades. However, both animals and riders seem to enjoy the experience.

I commented upon the great number of mail sacks that we had seen being unloaded into the lighters at Acajutla, and that started the well-informed railroad man upon a discourse regarding the workings of the parcels post in Salvador.

Two years ago the average amount of mail brought from Germany and England to Acajutla of each steamer was one sack; now there is a lighter load, chiefly of great hampers. Next to nothing in that lighter originated in the United States.

"See here," said Spencer, in answer to my query. "In this magazine [it was a New York publication] there are advertisements of five articles I want. One is manufactured in Boston, another in St. Louis, and another, you see, is a California product,

and still another comes from New Orleans. I 'd like to order all of 'em. But I won't—rather, I can't. Instead, I 'll get them from England and Germany, even though it takes longer and in the end I 'll not receive just what I wanted."

Naturally, I asked for an explanation.

"Why? Because England, Germany, and Salvador have parcels post," he continued. "The postage will be low and the inconvenience will be the minimum. Ordering from the States, the express bill would be larger than that for the articles themselves, and heaven only knows when the stuff would get here, not to mention the trouble with the customs, for every article sent in would be opened at the port, and the consignee obliged to forward to the officials there the amount of duty. The parcels post packages are opened at the point of destination, and all you have to do is to go to the office, pay the duty, and get the mail. It is as easy as rolling off a log."

Of course, all that was a year ago. It would be interesting to know just what difference our adoption of parcels post has made, and whether the expected transfer of Salvadorian business from Europe to our own markets has been effected.

A curious matter regarding our international trade relations with Salvador came to my attention and one that is perhaps worth mentioning, although to follow it out at length would be folly in an account that makes no pretence of being a discussion of economic conditions. It is this. A very apparent discrimination exists against the United States as regards duties, whose inevitable result, it would seem, will be the practical elimination of North American competition with Europe in this particular field. On general merchandise an average of thirty-nine per cent. more is collected on American products than upon French, German, and Belgian imports. On canned goods the difference amounts to ten cents a kilogramme, and on wines and liquors about seven cents a kilo, plus an average analysis tax of fifteen cents a bottle. So, despite the comparative proximity of United States supply points, and freight rates which favour them on an average of \$5.40 a ton, as compared with those of Europe, the great majority of Salvadorian money spent on imports finds its way across the Atlantic.

A glimpse of Salvadorian statistics (and they are both copious and trustworthy as compared with

the feeble attempts in this direction. of its neighbours) shows that in the last few years the importation of luxuries has advanced, while that of necessities has declined. Arguing along the line that the amount purchased indicates the financial ability of the purchaser, it would appear that the poor are getting poorer and the rich, richer. I believe the imports of all the republics would indicate a similar condition, were not such statistics, for the most part, either non-existent or hopelessly unreliable. The foreign commerce of Salvador in 1910 amounted to \$11,039,851, an increase over the previous year of \$1,209,167, despite the fact that imports fell off nearly half a million dollars. During the year the trade balance favored the little republic to the extent of nearly one hundred per cent.

While in search of statistical information, I had the pleasure of meeting Señor Rafael Guirola, *Ministro de Hacienda*, whose position corresponds, in a way, to that of our Secretary of the Interior. He spoke English well and possessed an excellent European education. Like all natives, he is exceedingly gracious and hospitable. Also, like most of them,—for they are all proud of their little

country,—I had not been with him five minutes before he had informed me that Salvador has the largest population proportionate to area of any country in the world, excepting only Belgium. The little republic includes 24,126 square miles within her borders, and her population was estimated at 1,070,155 in 1910, although nothing approximating a careful census had ever been attempted.

To gain an idea of the complete cultivation of the country it is only necessary to glance at any of the steep hills surrounding San Salvador and see the checkerboard fields that climb to their very tops, seemingly taking advantage of every square foot of tillable earth where crops will stick without sliding off.

It is a remarkably productive land, too, a unique evidence of the general fertility being the presence of orchids growing on telephone wires, a sight commonly encountered. However, in this respect, it seems fair to say that damper Costa Rica excels, where, it will be remembered, we saw hundreds of fence posts and railroad ties that had taken root. Salvador has a dry season, from December practically until June, and during that period the land

is parched and dusty, and the flowers and grass wither away.

I found this English gentleman who was managing Salvador's railroad concerned with other things besides tonnage, trade routes, and coffee shipments. Indeed, it always seems to me that a Britisher, if he has any originality at all, is far more likely to be interested in some unexpected subject far outside his personal business world than ever happens with Americans similarly situated. For is n't it a chronic trait of a Yankee mind to begin and end at the office, plus the affairs of the home and a serious consideration of a sort of self-inflicted recreation?

Be that as it may, Spencer was primed with unique information. Much of it was historic, and concerned Central and South America, throughout which he had travelled exhaustively. I am convinced he would have enjoyed being a historian as much as managing a railroad, and would have preferred globe-trotting to either. One of the odd tales he brought to my attention concerned the origin of the phrase "El Dorado," and its development, through the period of Spanish conquest, into its meaning of to-day. So in the

next chapter I temporarily abandon our modern Central American jaunt and devote a few pages to this quaint bit of the semi-historic, semi-legendary past.

One remark Spencer made sticks in my memory.

"A proper understanding of the historic development of Central America can never be gained by reviewing its political history. It must be a sociological study."

That has never been attempted, and perhaps never will be. A Bancroft is needed to unravel the snarls of the last century and from them straighten out the true strong lines of development and real historic meaning. And a vexing task it will be, thanks to the endless eruptions which have moulded and remoulded each and every land.

At all events, the meanings of the Central American countries lie in their peoples and not in their past. Study the people, and be satisfied. Above all—the advice is second hand, and can be yours for the asking of any foreign resident—learn to adapt yourself to their manner of life, and especially to its emphasis on the advisability of infinite leisureliness.

Spencer quoted Kipling on that head:

The end of the fight is a tombstone white
With the name of the dear deceased,
And the epitaph drear, "A fool lies here
Who tried to hustle the East."

"That," said he, "applies to Central America.
You see, we are next door to the East—there 's
nothing at all but the Pacific Ocean between."

CHAPTER XI

El Dorado



FOR even the casual investigator, the most romantic episode linked with the conquest of the southern Americas is the quest of that extraordinary will-o'-the-wisp, commonly known as El Dorado.

“Imperial El Dorado, roofed with gold;
Shadows to which, despite all shocks of change,
All onset of capricious accident,
Men clung with yearning hopes that would not die.”

Yet to-day little is known of these expeditions which at one time commanded such universal attention in the New and Old Worlds, principally because the records of them are chiefly to be found only in rare and all but forgotten Spanish chronicles, buried for centuries in the dusty archives of Spain and Peru.

A modern sequel of the quest for El Dorado

was that recounted to me by the British railroad manager in Salvador, as mentioned in the preceding chapter, and follows. For the further more detailed stories concerning the legend I am indebted to a number of excellent historic sketches by J. A. Manso, Ph.D., which appeared in the bulletin of the Pan-American Union.

To-day "El Dorado" is a misused phrase; it has come to imply a land of gold, or a treasure place of one kind or another. Literally, it means the "gilded one," being an abbreviated form of the Spanish *el hombre ó rey dorado*—the gilded man or king. The origin of the phrase and its distorted meaning is bound up with the legend of Lake Guatavita, near Bogotá, the capital of present-day Colombia, south of Panama.

The legend has it that in this lake there was a curious monster. So persistent and detailed is this portion of the tale that naturalists are inclined to believe that perhaps some giant reptile of the southern countries by chance migrated from his native haunts and inadvertently found his way to the lake. Be that as it may, the natives believed that there was a monster there and that he required an annual offering in the human shape. So each

year a priest was cast into the lake. First, however, his body was well greased and rubbed with gold dust, so that he literally became "the gilded man," or *El Dorado*. When the gilded priest was thrown in, all who could afford the religious luxury cast after him golden ornaments. So it came about that the words *el dorado* and the place where gold was to be found became somewhat identical in meaning. And when the gold-seeking Spaniards came and demanded that they be led to "the place where gold was to be found," naturally the answering phrase that passed from mouth to mouth among the natives was *el dorado*, and the Spanish *conquistadores*, taking it up, adopted it unconsciously as the title of the treasure places they sought.

A twentieth century aftermath of the search for this particular *El Dorado* occurred in the nineties, when an English company was organised to drain Guatavita. Lured by the legends of the offerings that had been cast into the lake in the "rare old, fair old golden days," this most picturesque of treasure hunts was launched, whose expenses were to be repaid—plus fabulous profits—from the proceeds of the priceless objects retrieved.

Enough capital was subscribed to construct a tunnel which partially drained the lake. Hundreds of golden ornaments were discovered, all in a limited area, indicating the truth of the legend, for apparently all had been thrown in the wake of the gilded sacrificial priests. But unfortunately the tunnel caved in, and it was some years before fresh capital undertook the completion of the novel enterprise. The expenditure of many thousand additional dollars resulted in the complete draining of the lake; it also accomplished the recovery from the muddy bottom of one solitary gold ring, valued at less than \$50. And that brought to a dismal ending this rainbow pursuit of *El Dorado*, the gilded one.

Even now the glamour of the "goode olde days" clings close to the Spanish Main, and the traveller with a spark of imaginative enthusiasm can let his thoughts wander back to the "years crowded with incident, streaked with tragedy, stained by crime, and darkened with intrigue"; years that also saw the *conquistadores* at their best, and were rich in heroism, amazing prowess, and matchless audacity. For the spirit of romance is still there, in the highlands and the lowlands of Central

America, and the wanderer among the little republics who fails to feel something of it fails indeed to gain the full measure of reward for his excursion from the beaten paths.

So a few paragraphs concerning the incident of *El Dorado*, as picturesque as any in the rich storehouse of Latin-American history, may be admissible in a rambling account whose object is not alone to give a picture of Central America to-day, but also, if possible, to portray something of the spirit of the country as absorbed by one who passes through it, with an eye and ear attentive to the past and to the future.

A more detailed account of the Guatavita legend follows, told for the most part in the words of Dr. Manso.

It was in 1535 that a roving Indian first told the Spaniards the story of the gilded chieftain to whom they forthwith gave the name of *El Dorado*—the Gilded Man or King—a name which was subsequently applied not only to the gilded chief himself, but also to the city wherein he was supposed to reside. At that time Sebastian Belalcazar, the lieutenant of Francisco Pizarro, was in Quito, and here it was, according to Castellanos, where—

An alien Indian, hailing from afar,
Who in the town of Quito did abide,
And neighbour claimed to be of Bogotá,
There having come, I know not by what way,
Did with him speak and solemnly announce
A country rich in emeralds and gold.

Also, among the things which them engaged,
A certain king he told of who, disrobed,
Upon a lake was wont, aboard a raft,
To make oblations, as himself had seen,
His regal form o'erspread with fragrant oil
On which was laid a coat of powdered gold
From sole of foot unto his highest brow,
Resplendent as the beaming of the sun.

Arrivals without end, he further said,
Were there to make rich votive offerings
Of golden trinkets and of emeralds rare
And divers other of their ornament:
And worthy credence these things he affirmed;
The soldiers, light of heart and well content,
Then dubbed him El Dorado, and the name
By countless ways was spread throughout the world.

According to the chronicler, Juan Rodriguez Fresle, who was a son of one of the *conquistadores* of New Granada, the lake on which were made these offerings of gold and emeralds was Guatavita, a short distance to the north-east of Bogotá. And

the source of his information respecting the nature of the ceremonies connected with these offerings was, he assures us, no less than one Don Juan, the cacique of Guatavita, who was the nephew of the chief who bore sway at the time of the arrival of the Spaniards under Jimenez de Quesada, and who was then preparing himself by a six years' fast to succeed his uncle as cacique of Guatavita. After this long fast, which was made under the most trying conditions, the successor to the caciqueship was obliged to go to the lake of Guatavita and offer sacrifice to the devil, who, Fresle informs us, was regarded by the aborigines as their god and master. After being stripped, he was anointed with a viscous earth, which was then overspread with powdered gold in such wise that the chief was covered with this metal from head to foot. He was then placed on a balsa provided with a great quantity of gold and emeralds, which he was to offer to his god. Arriving at the middle of the lake, which was surrounded by a vast multitude of men and women, shouting and playing on musical instruments of various kinds, he made his offering by throwing into the lake all the treasure which he had at his feet. After this ceremony was

over, he returned to the shore, where, amid acclamations, music, and rejoicing, he was received as their legitimate lord and prince.

"From this ceremony," our author continues, "was derived that name, so celebrated, of 'El Dorado,' which has cost so many lives and so much treasure. It was in Peru that this name Dorado was first heard. Sebastian Belalcazar, having met near Quito an Indian from Bogotá, who told him about the gilded man just described, exclaimed, 'Let us go in search of that gilded Indian.'"

According to Padre Gumilla, the word "Dorado" had a different origin from that assigned by Fresle and Castellanos. It originated, declares the writer, on the Caribbean coast near Cartagena and Santa Marta, whence it passed to Velez and thence to Bogotá. When the Spaniards reached the elevated plain of Cundinamarca, they learned that "El Dorado was in the pleasant and fertile valley of Sogamoso." On reaching this place they found that the priest who made his oblation in the great temple there was wont to anoint at least his hands and face with a certain kind of resin over which powdered gold was blown through a hollow

reed or cane. From this circumstance the famous "Dorado" took his name.

Another account refers to the expedition of Gonzalo Pizarro to the land of Canela—cinnamon—in 1543. The ostensible object of the expedition was that of exploration, but its real purpose seems to have been the universal quest of "the great and wonderful prince who was called El Dorado."

"When I ask," writes Oviedo, "why they call this prince the Gilded Cacique or King, the Spaniards, who have been in Quito or have come to Santo Domingo, make reply that from what they hear respecting this from the Indians, this great lord or prince goes about continually covered with gold as finely pulverised as fine salt. For it seemeth to him that to wear any other kind of apparel is less beautiful, and that to put on pieces or arms of gold stamped or fashioned by a hammer or otherwise is to use something plain or common, like that which is worn by other rich lords and princes when they wish; but that to powder oneself with gold is something strange, unusual, and new and more costly, because that which one puts on in the morning is removed and washed off in the evening and falls to the ground and is lost.

And this he does every day in the year. While walking clothed and covered in this manner his movements are unimpeded and the graceful proportions of his person, of which he greatly prides himself, are seen in beauty unadorned."

From the foregoing it is seen that at the time of the arrival of the Spanish *conquistadores* in South America, three different reports were in circulation regarding the mysterious personage called El Dorado. That there were other accounts is undoubted, and some of them, perhaps, as authentic. And that there should have been different stories regarding the character and place of abode of this marvellous savage is what might have been expected by one who knows how prone the Indians are to exaggerate or to modify what they have heard, so as to suit their own fancy, says Dr. Manso.

The same may, in a measure, be said of the Spaniards also. After the successes achieved by their countrymen in Mexico and Peru, and after the millions of treasure which had been found in the lands of the Aztecs, Chibchas, and Incas, they were prepared for anything. Nothing seemed impossible, and no tale about gilded men or golden

palaces was so extravagant as to be rejected as false. They were ready to give full credence to even greater fictions than the Golden Fleece or the Apples of the Hesperides, and would not have been surprised to find Ophir or Tarshish in the valleys of the Orinoco or Amazon. The spirit of adventure and romance dominated every one not only in the Indies but in the mother country as well.

“For all this Spanish nation,” writes an old chronicler, “is so desirous of novelties that what way so ever they bee called with a becke only, or soft whispering voyce, to anything arising above water, they speedily prepare themselves to flie and forsake certainties, to follow incertainties, which we may gather by that which is past.”

And, in truth, that characteristic recorded by the chronicler is not outlived yet in southern Spanish land. For the sons of the old *conquistadore* stock—misbegotten as many of them are, intermingled with baser blood, and weaker by many multiples in body, mind, and spirit—are the same old Spaniards at heart. Let a “soft whispering voyce” call, and they ’ll follow to the rainbow’s end.

CHAPTER XII

Salvadorian Sidelights



ALVADOR is a sturdy little country of sturdy people. The racial strength results from the fact that Salvadorians are descended from excellent Spanish stock, the greater portion of the original immigration having come from the Viscaya districts, where were able-bodied men of ambition and thrift.

And these qualities they have retained, to a great extent, thanks to the highland healthiness and, especially, to the fact that from the first Salvadorians have been clannish to a fault; their portion of the general Spanish immigration has held aloof from intermixture, for the most part, and the strain has remained pure and wholesome.

If Salvador is referred to as clannish, Costa Rica should be reverted to for a word, as certainly that proud little land is by all odds the most clannish of them all. A good Costa Rican considers

his country as a thing quite apart from the other republics.

"The mail boat has just arrived from Central America," is the way they speak of a vessel's coming from the north in San José, according to a current story.

In Costa Rica settlement was made almost exclusively by Basques, whose blood now decisively overbalances that of the native Indians, with great benefit to the country. Not so, however, in Honduras and Nicaragua, where the foreign strain is the least apparent. Racially (and economically, too) these countries are retrograding.

"If they are left to themselves they will go back to barbarism," said an American Consul General, whose name cannot be quoted.

Salvador's modern history began in 1524 when Cortez conquered Mexico and sent Alvarado to Salvador, who in the following year captured Cuscatlan and officially subdued the country. In 1821 Salvador joined the Central American Federation, which was absorbed by Mexico under Iturbide in the following year, Salvador, however, objecting to the proceeding. Almost immediately Mexico lost the controlling reins, upon the death

of the Emperor, and Salvador again entered the confederation, in which it remained until 1841, when it formally withdrew and thenceforward maintained its independence.

But, truth to tell, we were more interested in Salvador's present than in its past, and concerned ourselves chiefly with having a good time, a pursuit in which we were ably abetted by some "native Americans," if the hybrid term be permitted.

One evening a Spanish gentleman called upon us. His name does n't matter. He had been educated in San Francisco, and was equipped to see both sides of the native Salvadorian life. According to the usual order of things, our caller and we walked in the plaza, where we eventually sat down, listening to the band music and chatting of social customs.

Salvador's social life, it seems, is a negligible quantity so far as the ladies are concerned. The men can go to the clubs, of which there are several, but for the women there is little or nothing to do. "Calls," the social mainstay of our own feminine society, are few and far between. One reason for the ban on "calling" is that unmarried men fight

shy of the custom, chiefly because when a suitor, or a possible suitor, comes to a home to see his lady, Spanish propriety compels mama or papa, or both, or in fact the "whole darn family," to be in the room during the call; and naturally this superabundance of chaperoning is n't eminently popular with the subjects of its attention. So the young men prefer walking in the parks when the band plays, for under such circumstances even the most persistent chaperon is apt to weary of a stern chase and seek a bench, allowing the couple to walk for at least a few minutes unmolested.

"It's really wonderful that our young men ever get a chance to pop the question!" laughed our informant.

He admitted that in his own case the lady of his heart had been won during a waltz. Dances offer the one great chance for wooing, because it is then possible to whisper sweet nothings at close range without being overheard. Señor D. also told amusingly of a Salvadorian cousin of his, a girl who was being educated in San Francisco, and had become engaged there to an American. Her father visited her and was scandalised beyond words when he found that her fiancé actually

held tête-à-têtes without a chaperon hearing every word that passed between them. That particular case, however, resulted in an international marriage, despite the attempted paternal censorship.

There is a deeper side to all this, and one that has been noticed specially at Panama, since American customs in such matters have rubbed shoulders with the Spanish ways. The girls know nothing at all when they are married. In fact it is almost fair to say that they practically do not know their husbands; they are married as strangers might marry. In hundreds of cases, in the better classes, bride and groom have never exchanged a dozen sentences, unheard by others, previous to their wedding. One result, of course, is unhappiness, and no doubt it chiefly falls upon the wife, for she is tied down as closely after marriage as before, while the husband may go where he will, and, seemingly, do about as he chooses with little or no unfavourable comment.

One of the show places of Salvador is Lake Ilopango, some four hours' drive from the capital. There two hotels are to be found, whose special attractions are bathing facilities, not to mention beautiful gardens and equally beautiful natural

surroundings, for the lake in itself is a scenic gem set in an environment of surpassing natural loveliness. One of the real features of the Ilopango trip is the road connecting it with San Salvador—a saddle-horse road only, for most of the distance—a highly picturesque route, used by crowds of pleasure-seekers on Sundays and holidays.

One afternoon our friend O. took us in his huge French automobile to see a little of San Salvador's surroundings. As the roads don't venture very far in any one direction, and are passably poor at that, "a little" is the most of Salvador that one can glimpse from an auto, under the most favourable circumstances. Over an unspeakable highway we went to the coffee *beneficio*, or mill, of Señor Miguel Duenas, a couple of miles from town, at the bottom of a winding grade of incredible steepness. The dust was six inches deep and powdery, and the bumps were endless; a worse road for an auto could not be imagined.

A high adobe wall surrounded the *finca*. Inside the gate was a courtyard, faced by the buildings of the mill on two sides, and by the wall and the drying *patios* on the others.

This was a "wet process" mill, and not one of



A highland coffee *finca*, with drying *pátios*

the largest or most up-to-date in the country, nor nearly as elaborate as many establishments we saw later in Guatemala.

The coffee as it comes from the tree resembles small cherries. First the outer covering of the "cherry" is scrubbed off mechanically, by a machine somewhat like a dish-washer that swishes its dishes around with revolving brushes in a tank. Then, by a process of fermentation in large concrete tanks, the inner double nuts or beans are further cleaned—a process that smells anything but fragrant. Next the almost-clean but still slimy berries are placed in the concrete or tiled open courts, or *patios*, where they are exposed to the sun for periods ranging from one to six days. After this another mechanical cleaning process is indulged in, the berries being ground together sufficiently to scrape them clean of the final shreds of the scum which the sun has dried hard upon them. After this the beans are sorted through a machine which operates much like a stone crusher's sorter, the graded beans of different sizes coming out of chutes and being placed in bags.

A final process through which the berries pass before the bags are sewed up for shipment is a

hand sorting. Women and children chiefly are employed for this work, which they do by the piece, their pay in Salvador averaging about fifteen cents a day.

In addition to this munificent wage, every worker is entitled to two meals a day, one at noon and the other in the evening. The luxury of a breakfast is omitted. The two meals the Indians do get consist of two *tortillas* a man per meal, with as many black beans, or *frijoles*, piled on top as the recipient can contrive to balance. As the *tortillas* are about five inches in diameter the reader with a trend for mathematical calculation can readily figure out how many rusty-looking beans constitute the allotment.

The meals are prepared by old women. A dark hole of a room, ventilated only by the door and a single window that opens into the courtyard, serves as kitchen. Along one side, on a sort of counter of stone, are four or five charcoal fires, giving much the appearance of a blacksmith forge. Over the fires are crude gridirons. And here the *tortillas*, distant and solider cousins to our Yankee hot cakes, flourish. Nor do the eaters fail to enjoy the tough and unsalted dough; the care



The coffee berry at close range

with which the earthenware crocks containing the uncooked corn-meal batter are guarded would seem to hint that there are enthusiasts who would even tackle that!

Of course, the beans figure heavily in this culinary department and great steaming pots over the smaller fires are watched hungrily by all eyes. "*Tortillas and frijoles!*" Faith, what epicure would ask for more! As a matter of fact, the combination forms the universal diet of the poor classes throughout Latin Land.

The applicants for meals file in and are allotted their share of the plunder, a strict tab being kept upon them, so that it is quite impossible for "repeaters" to operate successfully. As they go out balancing their meal in one hand, with the other they grab up huge handfuls of salt to sprinkle over the beans. The amount of salt used is phenomenal. With a saucerful of beans it is safe to say that the average native will use a heaping tablespoon of salt, if he is fortunate enough to get so much.

On the homeward trip we chanced to spy the entrance to one of the primitive native pottery works, and investigated. The "works" sur-

rounded a little courtyard. On one side were the ovens in which the modelled materials were baked—bricked-in affairs about four feet square and eight feet high inside, with furnaces beneath, fed with wood from a stoker's chamber dug in the ground beside them. The tops of the roofs were fantastically decorated with gargoyles and other contrivances. With the fiery red embers below and the heat waves exuding from the cracks in the adobe and brick walls, there was quite an air of accomplishment about the ovens. After the pottery has been baked for twenty-four hours, the bricked-in doors are torn down and the articles are ready to be painted with a preparation which gives them a glossy coat, this being baked into the clay with another short oven treatment.

Across the courtyard from the ovens was the workshop of the moulders, which is nothing more than a thatched shed open toward the court, equipped with benches and crude lattice. Although it was after hours, as Salvador is not blessed with labour unions we had no difficulty in persuading a young fellow to do a little work for us. He was an apprentice, he explained, a trifle apologetic for his inaptitude.



Coffee in bloom

The lathe system is crudity itself. In all probability the same kind was used two thousand years ago, in the lands from which came the first earth user who taught the native Indians improved methods of pottery making. The worker sits on a bench, his legs hanging down through a hole, allowing his feet to revolve a heavy wooden disk beneath, which turns about horizontally as he shuffles it around with bare toes and heels. From this motive disk a rod comes up through the bench and turns another smaller disk just in front of the artisan, a few inches above the bench. This disk, the lathe proper, is nothing more than a heavy piece of rounded wood, flat on top and about fifteen inches in diameter.

First a helper selects a hunk of muddy clay from an urn. After kneading it for a few minutes on a wet bread-board affair, he hands it over to the artist, who slaps it down upon the revolving disk before him. He places his wet hands on the moving mass of clay and with a swiftness that is positively uncanny the material takes shape and sprouts upward, smoothing out and curving gracefully into the outlines of a vase. Then the creator (he is literally such) picks up a bit of thick

leather and gives a touch here and a turn there, and, lo and behold! a beautiful, graceful form emerges, well proportioned, with tasteful lines, and light and fragile as any connoisseur could desire. A quick application of a piece of string, cunningly held between trained fingers, and the new-made vase is cut clean from the remaining clay at its base.

It is a matter of seconds only. The boy worker grins his appreciation of your praise, and when you give him the few *reals* he has so well earned by his deft exhibition, even more of his white teeth show.

"What a catchy number for a vaudeville act," says the practical American. "It would make a hit on Broadway." And as we drive to the Foreigners' Club through the fast falling twilight, he expatiates upon just how the new act should be presented. It reminded me of a trip I once made across Norway with an American banker. Whenever we happened upon a bit of particularly attractive scenery, he immediately assessed it in dollars and cents; what it would be "worth" in America was his slogan. "If we only had that in Central Park!" was the inevitable exclamation

when some telling bit of the fjordland came to view.

On the homeward drive we passed the house of the former president, a "nest egg" laid during his profitable administration, O. called it. It appears that the former chief executive acquired the habit of setting aside such provisions for a rainy day. Taken all in all, it was a very creditable looking egg, was that palace home.

The "white house" of San Salvador lies directly across the street from the city's principal barracks. Rumour has it that there is a secret underground passage between the two, which is not improbable. A less believable embellishment to the tale is that the masons who constructed the tunnel, after the job was completed, were exiled to a remote interior town from which they never returned.

Later, at the Foreign Club, conversation drifted around to a comparison of Central with North American politics. Some of the Americans ridiculed the farcical local elections, wherein the "official candidate" is always elected, for the good and sufficient reason that there are no other candidates, or if there are, no one dares to vote for them.

"Why is that any worse than the American worship of the machine candidate?" asked an intelligent Salvadorian member of the group, an educated man broad enough to appreciate the drawbacks of his little land, and yet with enough real patriotism to stand up for her merits. "You in North America swallow whole the candidate offered to the public by the party in power. It is a foregone conclusion that the party candidate will be elected. It is folly to oppose him, and rank heresy for a party member to vote against the choice of his party rulers."

That remark, of course, was delivered half a year before our presidential convention of 1912 produced a third candidate, and the November election endorsed Democracy instead of Republicanism. However, in the sense meant, it would hold water under any circumstances.

In Salvador, by the way, every one over eighteen years of age must vote or pay a fine equivalent to one dollar. Most of the well-to-do prefer the fine, especially as the ballot is not secret, and if one happened to vote for the wrong man, the after results might be unpleasant.

Of course, some one broached the matter of our

inhuman treatment of negro offenders in the South and elsewhere, and of our persistent labour tragedies. That is an unpleasant habit which the peoples of the earth have when we Americans spread-eagle overmuch, or a little too enthusiastically point out the moats in the eyes of others. The lynching of a coloured law-breaker, or the tragic results of a "dynamite plot," they tell us, are far worse curses for a republic than the petty political ills of the southern lands which we so often contemptuously style "barbaric." Indeed, an American's patriotic egotism is not above receiving intelligent bumps even in the smallest and most backward of our little brother republics, at the hands of well-read men familiar with the fundamental faults of the peoples of the western hemisphere. For instance, that minor matter of the comparative drunkenness and disorder at home and in Central America constantly crops up; for it is undeniable that a North American play-time crowd of the poorer class is far more drunken and disorderly than ever is the case south of Mexico. Latin characteristic cheerfulness, perhaps, is the reason.

An amusing incident was told regarding Pru-

dencio Alfaro, who now resides in Guatemala for the good and sufficient reason that he is "wanted" in Salvador.

Senor Alfaro has the presidential itch. He said that he was not allowed to be a candidate at the last election when Dr. Araujo was selected, the latter being the "official candidate." After the election the President asked Alfaro to have a friendly talk with him, the story goes, but the latter was a bit rude in his reply, and so amicable relations were suspended. Somewhat later Alfaro figured in a "wake" at Santa Anna, a town in northern Salvador. There were a coffin, candles, and liquors; likewise an excited crowd, and a considerable amount of firearms. The only adjunct to the wake that was lacking was the corpse—for there was n't any. The "wake" was a ruse to cover a meeting for the organisation of an uprising in favour of Alfaro. Unfortunately for the success of the scheme, the government soldiers got wind of it and swooped down before matters had progressed far. And Alfaro removed his residence to Guatemala.

Our last evening in San Salvador was spent autoing. First the car took us far out on the

road that leads to Guatemala, the old highway that for years was the chief artery of travel all the way through to Mexico. Far away over the moonlit valleys we could see the filmy outlines of the hills of Honduras, the hazy middle distance having been the scene of many an international war, and, no doubt, many an incident worthy of the pen of novelist or historian.

By the roadside we hurried past occasional ox-carts, camping for the night, returning from country *fincas* to the market of San Salvador. Under the carts in the dust, and on top of their loads, when those loads happened to be corn, slept the *mozos*, while the big clumsy oxen munched nearby, tied to some tree or fence. Many a driver awoke abruptly from his pastoral sleep as the big motor chugged past, startled by the apparition that whirled through the midst of his dreams and so quickly vanished among the dust clouds of the old road, a highway no doubt often trod by the mounts of the royal cavaliers of yore, the pride of Spain, who marched and countermarched its length in their first conquests of the land, and from whose blood, perhaps, this very dreaming half-bred driver may have sprung.

"*El Diablo!*" grunted the ox drivers, as they spit out the dust we bequeathed them, and sank again into slumber.

Assuredly there could be no stranger contrast in transportation methods than that afforded by the powerful, dashing touring car, the boast of some French shop, and the archaic ox-carts. It was the essence of modernity rubbing shoulders with a relic of barbaric yesterday.

Those Salvadorian ox-carts, by the way, have a wealth of local interest. From the details of their appearance the initiated can tell whence they come with surprising precision. For instance, those with solid wheels hail from the far side of the Lempa River; few of them are seen in town. The drivers of these strange carts carry longer and sharper goads than their fellows of the city, whose beasts are better trained. The sides of the carts that come from the sugar districts are made of pressed cane. Bamboo sides indicate still another section, while the carts from the cattle country are lined with hides, bound together with leather thongs.

Returning, we chanced upon a strange nocturnal Passion Play at the village of Mexijcanos. A

score of children were performing before a table in a decorated doorway, where lay the symbolical new-born Christ. The children, white-clad and bearing crooks, were the legendary shepherds, leading to the homage of the Christ three other tots, who judging by the stupendous length of their cotton batting beards must have represented the three Wise Men. Curiously enough the music twanged by guitar and fiddle was unmistakably impressive, despite the absurd fact that those solemn youngsters were chanting biblical words to the unescapable "Merry Widow"—we had heard it in cafés in New York, at a cock fight in Panama, in the Carib huts in the banana jungles of Costa Rica—in fact, everywhere and at all hours; but this was unquestionably the occasion at which the Viennese opera shone most conspicuously!

Our amusement, however, was inexplicable to those proud relatives, the spectators, of all ages, colours, and previous conditions of servitude, who were most intent upon the developments of the carefully practised play, in which, it was easy to see, the youthful flower of the community was starring. A few tapers supplied light, scarcely

needed, however, thanks to the generous illumination of a full moon. A quainter scene, or one more unexpected, it would be difficult to encounter on a nocturnal automobile jaunt on this or any other continent.

But alas for the solemnity of the Passion Play! The appearance of a sixty horse-power automobile was a cruel counter-attraction, to be withstood by the righteous only with heroic fortitude. Despite it, however, the audience stood by its guns manfully, and the play might have progressed to a full house and a happy conclusion had the demoralizing influence ceased with the car alone. But add to it a tall white lady, strangely clad, and three bare-headed Gringos—mad Gringos, indeed, for who but a mad Gringo would go bareheaded, especially at night time?—and the strain became too great.

First the small boys focused their attention upon us and the car, after the habit of youngsters, who invariably prefer doing what they should not to that which they should. Then gradually the larger lads, with pop eyes, infinite curiosity, and a babble of comment, gathered to take in all the details of the new attraction. They became bolder.

Strengthened by the addition to their inquisitive ranks of a mad man and a drunken man (an admirable combination!) they waxed troublesome, until finally one contrived to sound the horn. There were shouts of delighted laughter and grunts of disapproval. The players wavered in their lines. A threatening growl went up. Even the "Merry Widow" for once seemed to hesitate.

Clearly, we were not desirable adjuncts to a mid-night Passion Play. So we left, standing not upon the order of our going. Not, however, until all the youth of Mexijcanos had tagged after us a block or two, hooting and throwing gravel and sand.

CHAPTER XIII

Into Guatemala



GUATEMALA is reached like all the other republics. There is a seaport, a railroad journey, and then the pleasant highlands and the capital.

San José de Guatemala is the western entrance, and there we arrived late one hot January night and landed early the next morning.

Our disembarkation proved something of a diplomatic event, thanks to the presence of two foreign ministers, one from Salvador and the other from Portugal, the latter with a pretty little wife and a vast amount of baggage. There was, of course, official greeting for the foreign representatives, but even the sacredness of the international relations involved could not mitigate the humours and near-tragedies of the landing.

At seven, or thereabout, we were lowered over the ship's side in breakfastless misery, and down

into the waiting lighter by means of a double seat affair that was swung out on a boom and let down with block and tackle. The human part of the transit was accomplished well enough, but when it came to the baggage there were difficulties.

In the first place, the Portuguese minister—a sombre personage quite devoid of humour—made a tactical error, for he consented to leave the ship's deck before all of his numerous bags had preceded him. But that baggage followed—fast. First came a trunk, thrown bodily down, which landed in the bottom of the lighter with a splintering thud, amid the fruitless but hearty protests of the minister and the tears of his better half. Then followed a bag of generous proportions and great avoirdupois. A bag will gain an astonishing momentum if left to its own devices in a drop of fifteen or more feet, and this one alighted almost a total wreck. More tears from Madame, and more unministerial imprecations from the Portuguese diplomat, who became anything but diplomatic. Finally, perhaps thanks to the Castilian metaphors and the tearful feminine French, the red-faced pirate who presided over the baggage smashing operations repented, and the rest of

the luggage was let down into the lighter by ropes, with some pretence of care. We who witnessed the exhibition decided that a first-class addition to a west coast travelling equipment would be a parachute, attachable to trunks for such occasions.

Landing at the high iron-legged wharf was characteristic of the method in vogue at most of the ports. A boom or crane swings out from the wharf over the lighter, which rides some twenty or thirty feet below on the water beside the slippery piles, probably pounding and lurching in the everlasting swell that rolls in "out of China, 'cross the sea." Suspended from the boom is a bird-cage affair which is lowered to the floor of the lighter; into this four or five passengers crowd and are hoisted through the air with a bewildering upward whirl and then deposited on the wharf, where they are released.

"There's room for four acquaintances or five friends," was the way a fellow-passenger expressed the carrying capacity of the San José cage.

In rough weather similar contrivances are used on the steamers when placing passengers aboard lighters, only there a cask capable of accommodat-



“ Nearly every landing is made through the medium of lighters ”



One of the few fine roads in Salvador

ing one person is usually employed. When there is a sea running this method of disembarkation is as strenuous as it is novel, and even at the wharves it is highly picturesque to see the cage swing out over the ocean, with a background of blue sky and distant white beach, depositing its burden in the snub-nosed, rocking lighter, where coffee sacks, bales of merchandise and hides, boxes, women with gay parasols, perspiring drummers, and the barefooted and often shirtless members of the crew are mingled with an awesome disregard to anything but the convenience of the minute.

Indeed, disembarkation of humans or of freight is an interesting study along the west coast of Central America. Some one should write a treatise upon it, perhaps called "One Hundred Curious and Inconvenient Methods of Making a Landing," and assuredly there is enough and to spare, both in text and illustrative material, to make up a unique work.

With two exceptions, every landing on the coast is made through the medium of lighters, and in many instances these do not go to any wharf, for the good and sufficient reason that there is none to go to, but instead are beached and unloaded by men who

wade out into the water, shoulder high, and carry huge burdens ashore. At Amapala, in Honduras, this method is very picturesque, and vastly labour-some. There we saw bronze-skinned huskies bearing rolls of barbed wire, kegs of nails, and every conceivable sort of merchandise from the lighters to the shore and staggering back under great packages of hides. At Ocos, in northern Guatemala, the landing is quite venturesome, for it is necessary to guide the clumsy lighters through the surf with a continuous cable, which is moored out in deep water and is kept in motion during the landing by a steam winch ashore, or by horses, when the winch is out of commission, a matter of frequent occurrence.

All this means that the freight gets some rough handling even before it is on *terra firma*, while thereafter all sorts of experiences may be in store for it, varying from piecemeal transportation on the backs of burros over scores of miles of mountainous trails to almost equally severe treatment en route on miniature tropical railroads. Wherefore it is no uncommon sight to see broken crates and damaged freight.

Even a casual observer remarks that the crating



Barbed wire for Honduras. Primitive lightering method at Amapala



Amapala, Honduras

and general packing of goods originating in Europe seems to be better, on an average, than those which come from our own manufacturers. Consuls and men in Central American retail business will tell you, however, that during the last three years our exporters have made notable progress in shipping methods, and are now, through familiarity and bitter experience, fairly well versed in the peculiar needs of the territory so far as extreme packing precautions are concerned.

An incident related by a druggist in one of the republics illustrates the importance of close attention to proper packing, and the havoc which an incompetent New York shipping clerk may create. He had received a big box upside down. Its rough treatment had seriously damaged the contents, and it all happened because a comma had been misplaced.

"Alto, no debe tumbarse," was the way the directions should have been written, meaning "Care, not to be turned over." But their translation, as actually written, read: "Care not, to be turned over"—an exhortation which seemed to have been followed implicitly.

Landing of passengers is accomplished in many

ways, as intimated. At some of the more enterprising ports rowboats or launches hover about the gangway, soliciting patronage, and often this competition brings about amusing incidents. I remember that at Acapulco on the Coast of Mexico a bitter war was being waged between two rival boatmen. Both had placards soliciting business, the one of the "automobile launch" printed abominably by a Mexican whose English was original, and that of his rival typewritten very dirtily. The latter plea for patronage was a work of art, and I copy it here verbatim:

Caballero! Read this, then do!

Although my name is Rico (Rich) I em pore. All I have is two good boats the New York & May Flour which bring bread to my family through your kindness.

Our boats were filled until a rich man, wanting to get richer, got a gasoline launch and resolved to drive our boats, propelled by blistering hands. I have nothing left but to appeal to you.

Always take the NEW YORK Or May Flour.

Our knowledge of this town is perfect.

As the price for the round trip was ten cents, we "then did" and always patronised the "May Flour," with apologies to any Puritan ancestors



How freight is handled in the southland

we may have had. I was never able to discover who provided the rhetoric for that appeal.

Another incident of the west coast that will be remembered by any one who has made the trip concerns Ocos, the northern port of Guatemala and "the only port in Central America where there is always a ship." For Ocos makes that boast with good reason, as a 5000-ton Cosmos line freighter parted her cable one night some years ago and drifted ashore, while, 't is said, the after-effects of much good German beer occupied the attention of her officers and crew. Now that freighter adorns the beach, a hundred yards or so from the water's edge, for the sands have built up around her. After futile efforts to get her off, the insurance company sold the ship to a local capitalist, the purchaser having had a dream in which the Virgin Mary appeared and promised to float the vessel. Unfortunately for the investment, the visionary promise was n't fulfilled, so the steamer lies where she struck, still fully equipped with engines, compasses, boats, and even some six hundred tons of Australian coal. Occasionally the amphibious white elephant is painted, so that altogether it looks quite natty, and cer-

tainly most extraordinary far up on the sands of this diminutive and woefully desolate little landing place.

But to return to our own landing.

The customs examination was not at all disagreeable, as we had been warned it would be by "experienced" people who added a further misstatement of the actual facts by reiterating that travelling in Guatemala was both difficult and dangerous. It is neither, and as to the customs, an average piratical New York inspector seems like a demon incarnate when compared to the mild-mannered little gentlemen at San José whose chief duty, we were told, was to prevent arms from entering the country.

One of the interesting things about the customs is that no silver can be exported. Take away all of the filthy "shinplasters" you want (which will be none at all!), but don't venture to deport any of the meagre store of silver. However, as one very seldom sees silver in circulation, the temptation is remote.

Although the examination of the chance traveller is not irksome, importers occasionally encounter difficulties. For instance, a week later,

at the Gran Hotel in Guatemala city, a very morose commercial traveller opened up his heart and his grievances to me. He represented an electric supply house, of Chicago, I think. The Guatemalan government was considering the installation of some electrical equipment, chief among which, if I remember correctly, was to be a display sign announcing some of the virtues of the administration. The drummer reached the capital readily enough, but could n't get his sample lights and equipment through the Puerto Barrios customs. The article which seemed to stick chiefly in the official crop, so to speak, was an electric vacuum cleaner, in which the enterprising Yankee hoped to interest the Guatemalan government. It appeared that but a short time before some less altruistic individual had tried to smuggle in an infernal machine—also intended to clean up the government!—and with this incident fresh in mind the port officials were running no chances with diabolical contrivances of which they wotted not. Finally, after weeks of delay, that stranded drummer secured a special dispensation and got his cleaner to the capital.

San José de Guatemala is like Atlantic City in

that it has a board walk. However, there the resemblance ends.

Beside the board walk and the beach there are a railroad depot, a cable station, wharf company offices, barracks, and a couple of hotels. Behind the walk, hidden from the refreshing breeze, snuggles a dilapidated town, which is little more than a few hundred bedraggled shacks clustered about a hopelessly hot plaza.

Later, we came to know San José very well. Indeed, far too well, for we were stranded there two mortal weeks awaiting a steamer which refused to arrive upon scheduled time or any other way. But there are less pleasant places than San José in which to be stranded and "The Playa" was not a bad sort of hotel at all. A few months after we left, it burned, and of "The Playa" it need not be said, as of Cæsar, that "the evil men do lives after them, the good is oft interred with their bones." For there are comfortable breezy balconies surrounding its two floors, upon which the rooms opened seaward and landward, so that ocean-cooled fresh air was a drug on the market, and a delightful one at that. The beds were neither better nor worse than the average tropical town



"The volcano Agua dominates every Guatemalan view "

hotel bed, which means that they were nothing more than a piece of canvas stretched tightly between side braces. At least they were clean (there were no available lurking places for even an enterprising tropical insect), and, while not palatial in their comfort, like London-made ice-cream soda, "they were not as bad as they might be."

Just behind the hotel are level fields, so low that they can be flooded from the sea, and here a crude process of salt refining progresses, the water being let in and allowed to evaporate, after which the residue of salt is scraped up and stored. As there is a prohibitive import duty on salt, every one is forced to use the coarse and none too clean native product, which sells at a high rate and is said to furnish an extremely profitable business to the few privileged *concessionaires* who control the industry.

Back of the salt fields, peering over the undulating line of verdant tree-tops, stands the volcano Agua, a beautifully symmetrical peak which rises to a height of some 13,000 feet and dominates every Guatemalan view much as Fujiyama holds sway over scenic Japan. It was Agua, the "Mountain of Water," which destroyed the original Guate-

mala City, the capital and pride of all Central America, in 1541. But the quaint history of the mighty mountain shall be reserved for another chapter, as later we came upon an intimate footing with it, spending a delightful week at its very base near the city which it devastated and among the ruins of a later city which its sister volcano, Fuego, the "Fire Mountain," likewise destroyed. And, indeed, we came almost to look down upon Agua, for ultimately we attained the summit of Acate-nango, its loftier neighbour, credited by some with being the highest peak in Central America. However, when first we saw Agua's cone from the Pacific, shimmering and blue in the cloudless distance, we greeted it for what it truly is, the Queen Beautiful of all southland mountains.

On the ocean side is the beach and the Pacific, both extending as far as the eye can see. Early in the morning an occasional fisherman plies his leisurely trade along the water's edge. They wear nothing at all, do these dusky southern editions of well-clad Isaak Walton, but for all that appear remarkably modest. Did you ever consider that a white man, minus clothes, seems infinitely more *naked* than a black one? I don't



“ The naked fisherman fits into the bright picture admirably ”



The peaks of Acatenango and Fuego, with Antigua in the foreground

pretend to analyse the psychology of the visual phenomenon, but it's a fact.

These particular naked fishermen fit into the bright picture admirably. Physically, they are marvels of perfection; in fact, on the beach of San José we saw finer specimens of physical manhood than were encountered anywhere else. The fishing consists of standing at the edge of the surf and throwing a line far out, after which it is coiled in and wound skilfully on the bent forearm, until ready for another whirl of the hook and lead about the fisherman's head, from which they shoot out much as a baseball emerges from the mysterious "wind-up" of a pitcher. It is eminently picturesque; the brown men, their skin glistening in the bright morning sunlight, the snowy white surf curling up around their legs and then receding, each wave taking with it tiny rivulets of the black sand, and shoreward the setting of palm fronds and greenery, all backed by the majestic peak of Agua, as a frame to the picture.

That is the early morning attraction of the beach. Thereafter, until the hot hours of the *siesta* time are passed, the shore front and all the rest of San José is dead; about the only living thing

visible is the sentry on the board walk at the entrance to the barracks, and he, barefooted little ragamuffin, seems more dead than alive.

Then toward evening the one daylight diversion comes into its own, and the youth and beauty of the place take an ocean dip. It is very decidedly a "dip" and nothing more, for the women (most of the bathers are feminine) venture no farther than the extreme edge of the froth that blows in from the breaking surf, and there splash about, giggle, and pour water on each other with a basin. For bathing suits most of them wear simply a blanket wrapped about them. None boast stockings, and not a few of the poorer ones change their attire with no other seclusion than that obtained by moving a few rods along the beach. Yet when my wife went swimming in a very normal skirted suit, something of a sensation was created, to say nothing of the horrible social shock administered when a friend and myself, our travel wardrobes not including bathing-suits, appeared in nothing more than the most vital half of an abbreviated B. V. D. suit of underclothing.

Social life at San José centres about the *cantina* of the Playa Hotel, and for at least one expatriated



Indians on the trail ,



San José's feminine bathers, chiefly clad in blankets, confine their activities to pouring water on each other with a basin

American there was entirely too much of this particular breed of liquified society. He was connected with the railroad, and was typical of the "tropical tramps" whom too much "white eye," as the Guatemalan variety of alcoholic beverage is called, was hurrying down the road that leads to utter incompetency.

"Some day I 'll be appreciated," he was wont to assert about third drink time in the morning. "I 've put in six years learning all about Central America, and now it 's simply a matter of going up to New Orleans and placing my services at the disposal of an exporter. I could save 'em thousands, and double business in Guatemala, for I know the ropes. Only they 'll have to pay me what I ask."

He was working for \$60 a month, and suffered from intermittent fever, a bad liver, and the cumulative effects of much alcohol, one of which undoubtedly will end his earthly troubles long before any discriminating exporter recognises his peculiar worth.

The hospitality of the American consular agent was a welcome addition to the drab weeks we later sojourned in San José. He had a breezy upper

balcony, a huge rope hammock made in Corinto, some things to drink, and a clothes-basket full of phonograph records of the vintage of 1900, which were played upon a rusted instrument. As the heat had warped the records, the resulting "music" was a bit grotesque.

Our initial breakfast at San José cost ten dollars a plate. Exorbitant? No, not at all, although it must be confessed that until one gets accustomed to the huge proportions of the bills when reckoned in native money, they are staggering. For instance, a bottle of beer (atrocious Guatemalan beer) costs eight dollars a bottle. The price of a shave is one dollar. Hotels that charge less than twenty dollars a day are few and far between.

Guatemalan currency, you see, is slightly depreciated. During our visit the current rate of exchange was about eighteen to one, so that a native dollar's value in our money was approximately five-and-a-half cents. However, the exchange rate fluctuates violently, and 't is whispered moves up and down the scale very much as dictated by the financial ring which is hand in glove with the government. But even when the rate is presumably normal and steady, it is remarkable

how the price of money differs dependent upon whether one is buying or selling; if a buyer, the exchange suddenly is low, but if you are leaving and desire to get rid of a wallet full of the big notes (many with the dimensions of an ordinary letterhead) you discover that just then Guatemalan money is as cheap as it is dirty.

Be that as it may, it truly requires a lightning calculator to keep tab when one handles native money, American gold, and the shinplasters of neighbouring republics all at the same time. Of course, the stranger gets "stuck" at every financial encounter, but after all it matters little enough, for all expenses in Guatemala are delightfully low. That there is profit from the money changers' standpoint is indicated by their great number in the cities, for every block boasts at least a couple of signs announcing a *Cambia de Moneda*.

Leaving San José shortly after nine in the morning one reaches Guatemala City at six in the evening, the distance being seventy-five miles. The train stops everywhere, and for as long as it pleases, but the service is passably fair and far better than that encountered on the west slope of Costa Rica.

A couple of hours of the long day of travel are devoted to a "lay over" at Esquintla, where we breakfasted, viewed a picturesque church and market, and renewed an acquaintance.

A noonday breakfast at the Hotel Metropole, like some kinds of pills, should be taken as quickly as possible. There was an abundance of splendid fruit—almost a rare occurrence on a southern table—*tortillas*, *frijoles negros*, and even chicken. There were also a fowl or two on the floor beneath the dining table; but who so finicky as to object to that! The maids were dark of skin and bare of foot, and wore their slick black hair in two braids down their backs, each braid interwoven with soiled pink ribbon or bunting and tied with a bow at the end.

The "old acquaintance" incident needs a word of introduction. On the steamer between Balboa and Puntarenas, one of our travelling companions had been a French "count." At least, he gave every one to understand that he was a count, and certainly he lived up to the part admirably. He dressed foppishly; as one fellow expressed it, he "wore everything but the galley stove." His monocled eye was supercilious, he was always com-

plaining about the poor service, and generally making a nuisance of himself. It was understood that he had "extensive interests in Guatemala." It must be admitted that the "count" was impressive and really made something of a stir in the circles of ship gossip.

During our nooning at Esquintla we met the "count" again. It was something of a revelation, not to mention a humiliation, so far as he was concerned. For the "count" was tending bar! Yea, verily, the alleged scion of a noble race was mixing drinks, and mixing them with a skill that bespoke previous experience.

I sought information from an American *finquero*.

"Oh, *that?*" said he. "Why, he's an old hand here. Been bumming around Guatemala for years. Every time he gets ahead of the game he goes off somewhere and throws a bluff at being a real high roller. Seems to like it."

I admit experiencing an unholy relish in patronising that bar and having the "count" wait upon me, just for "auld lang syne" and the memory of his abominable rudeness on board ship. He never batted an eye.

On the train later Fate administered another

setback to a fellow-traveller. This one was a very obnoxious English drummer, a typical mannerless third-rater, a mixture of ignorant asininity and brazen hoggishness.

On the train from Esquintla the drummer was first on board and immediately appropriated a double seat on the shady side, where he sprawled luxuriously with his bags pyramided around him, while some of the rest of us, including ladies, were jammed hotly into single seats in the sun. But pride went before a fall, and in this instance the fall took the form (a very buxom form it was, too!) of a massive Indian woman bearing a nursing child and followed by two more. Every other seat being occupied she planted herself beside the irate Britisher, and forthwith gave a breakfast, *au naturel*, to the howling infant, while a very tangible odour of things in general and Indian in particular radiated in all directions from the immediate vicinity. Eventually the drummer evacuated his position, a sadder and a wiser man.

Later in the journey some well-to-do natives bought fish to take to their city home. The fish were little fellows called *mojara* caught in Lake Amatitlan, and vended strung on strong grass.

The purchasers carried them in their laps, entirely oblivious of the fact that there were other *strong* characteristics connected with the fish beside the grass, and that *fishiness* pervaded the entire car, not to mention their clothes. At another time the Indian lady who happened to share my seat gave what I choose to term a "southern exposure"; she was returning from a *fiesta*, and naturally wished to be economical with her best waist, so she unconcernedly took it off and donned the everyday one in its place. When I add that the waist was her only upper garment, the aptness of the "exposure" appellation and the probability of my embarrassment will be understood.

Which instances hint that in Guatemalan travel one must be prepared to take things as they come.

CHAPTER XIV

Tropic Land



HE train started with a bump, and it continued to bump.

"Don't you know," remarked our travelling companion, a delightful Britisher, "I really believe the bally engineer has his wife on board and means to shake her up a bit."

"You mean he has his *wives* on board and wants to shake *them*," was the prompt amendment offered to his remark and accepted.

In the seventy-five miles the road climbs some five thousand feet, the rise commencing perhaps fifteen miles inland, for the *tierra caliente*, or hot coastal plain, is practically level. Then the actual climb begins, and a picturesque one it is, after passing Santa Maria, the junction point of the "Pan-American" railroad which branches off thence northward to Champerico, continuing to an ulti-

mate connection with the Tehuantepec railroad in southern Mexico.

It is possible to take this rail route all the way to "the States" if desired, although the service supplied by the weekly schedule is not recommended either for speed or comfort. Plans for the construction of the "Pan-American" all the way to Panama have been in a somewhat hazy existence for several years, and some day possibly will materialise, although the profits of such an undertaking seem rather more than chimerical when one considers that on either hand the rail route will have direct water competition, while after all the traffic that can be expected is almost infinitesimal. Also, one is led to believe that no great enthusiasm greets the proposal to link up the republics too closely; their boundaries have served as barriers before, and a certain sort of patriotic caution has no desire to see these barriers weakened.

The scenery on the Limon-San José trip in Costa Rica is spectacular and abrupt. The Guatemalan journey from sea to capital more than makes up in the broad expansiveness of its shifting panoramas what it lacks in tropical verdure and

almost chaotic impressiveness. On the long climb the road zigzags interminably, crawling like a snake from one imagined contour line to another, and gradually hauling itself by sheer determination from the moist regions of the *tierra caliente* into the zone of the *tierra templada*, or the temperate district, while behind spreads out a magnificent vista of coastal plains, green, hot, flat, and infinitely rich, extending into hazy mists on either hand, its western boundary the Pacific, a broad band of burnished gold as the afternoon sun lowered over it.

Behind us lay the true Tropics—the torrid lowlands, where anything and everything will grow incredibly.

It is banana land (although the commercial production of bananas is now restricted to the eastern slope) and no better idea of the startling productiveness of soil and climate can be had than is given by this quotation of a paragraph written by Nevin O. Winter: “A prominent naturalist has made a record of the growth [of a banana shoot] during the first few hours. . . . Twenty minutes after the stalk was cut the new shoot could be seen pushing up from the centre of the cut.

Eight hours after cutting the shoot was nearly two feet in height, with the leaves forming. Thirty-one hours after cutting there were four well-developed and perfect leaves and the new shoot constituted quite a respectable looking tree. This great rapidity of growth is due to the spirally wrapped leaves that are contained within the banana stalk, and which are merely pushed upward and unroll. It is a fact that under these circumstances the growth is so rapid that it is almost discernible to the eye." Small wonder that the trail cut by a *machete* through the jungle is swallowed up within a fortnight!

Guatemala—which was spelled "Quahtemala" in the days of Cortez—is derived from an Indian word meaning the "land of trees." And well it deserves its title, for trees of countless kinds thrive throughout the varied zones of its many altitudes, as, in fact, does every conceivable growing thing.

It is said, for instance, that in the jungles there are more varieties of palms alone than of all the arboreal species of New England, ranging from the stately royal palm to diminutive palmlets that bear unpleasantly sharp spines and pleasantly tasting nuts. Best known of all the palms is the

cocoanut, whose fruit and trunk supply nearly every ingredient necessary for a contented tropical existence: house building material, food, drink, medicine, utensils, and even clothing.

The number of different species of wood has been placed in excess of four hundred. Among the more notable trees, both from the point of size and commercial value, are the mahogany, rosewood, ironwood, sapodilla, logwood, cedar, fig, and other dyewoods, mango, rubber, and a score of others. The interstices between the larger trunks—if there are any breathing spaces at all!—are crowded thick with bamboo shoots, while the entire jungle mass is twined together with a tenacious growth of vines, among which may be numbered the matapolo and sarsaparilla. Overhead are more vines with air roots, adding another barrier to the sunlight, while here and there orchid blossoms draped along the branches give a touch of gaiety to the unbroken greenery.

And as this land is a veritable botanical garden it is also an unhoused natural museum, for birds, butterflies, insects, and four-footed animals of every description thrive as luxuriously as do the growing things. There are bright-hued birds

galore, from the parrot and macaw to the quetzal, a gorgeous chromatic creation daubed riotously by nature with indigo, green, and scarlet, and with tail feathers a couple of feet in length, all going to make up a gay picture that figures prominently in the national emblem, chiefly, one is told, because the bird itself cannot survive captivity, a characteristic supposedly of national application.

Monkeys—spider, white-faced, mona, and howling—abound, and are used both for food and pets, in neither of which capacities, it seemed to me, filling any long felt want. Tapirs, jaguars, wild hogs, red deer, and sloth are among the larger beasts; occasional alligators, snakes, iguana—an unlovely member of the lizard family—spiders, scorpions, centipedes, and a multitude of lesser animals are numerous. But despite the variety and the great number of beasts of one kind and another in the jungles, it is seldom that any are encountered in the ordinary paths of travel, and so far as insects are concerned, the stranger who wanders even far from the beaten tracks finds little or nothing that is notably disagreeable.

The products of the soil of commercial value are many, and, at one altitude or another, include

about everything that the earth produces in any latitude.

Chief among them, from an economic standpoint, is coffee, whose production occurs in all three climatic belts, some of the best of it being grown on the beautiful *haciendas* in the *tierra fria*, the "cold region," although the vast majority of the acreage is confined within the 2500 and 4500 feet contours. Coffee is Guatemala's valuable export, and most of it goes to Europe from the western ports and via the Tehuantepec Isthmus, for the United States is fed almost entirely upon the far inferior—and less expensive—beans grown in Brazil. The high grade coffee of Guatemala and Salvador crosses the Atlantic to Hamburg; presumably German, English, and French "sufferers" from the "coffee habit" know good coffee when they taste it, and insist upon getting it. The production and handling of coffee was briefly described in a Salvadorian chapter, as was that of bananas, another Guatemalan product, as seen near Limon in Costa Rica.

Cacao is rapidly coming into its own as a commercially profitable product, sugar is commercially important, mangoes thrive, and a multitude of

lesser but delicious fruits are abundant, including such luscious delicacies as *aguacate* (alligator pears), breadfruit, and *granadilla*, the fruit of the passion flower.

While coming a poor third in point of commercial value to coffee and bananas, the products of the cocoanut palms, and the trees themselves, are worthy of a passing paragraph.

Of the 3,140,000 acres that it is estimated are producing cocoanut trees, some 255,000 are in Central America, about twice that amount in South America, and half as much in the West Indian Islands. Ceylon, British India, and the Eastern Archipelago contain the brunt of the balance. The value of the annual exportation of nuts and products from Central and South America is close to two million dollars. From the San Blas country in Panama alone six million nuts are shipped each year to New York, these being considered the finest in the world.

The tree flourishes best near the equator, although on low coasts it gets comparatively far north, and in India occasionally is successfully raised at altitudes as high as four thousand feet. It has a cylindrical trunk, often as large as two

feet in diameter, and in height ranging from sixty to one hundred feet. From the bottom upward are rings marking the places where old leaves grew, and it is said that the age of a tree may be approximated by allowing twelve years to each ring. At the top is a glorious feather-duster arrangement of green leaves, perhaps twenty feet long, the base of the leaf stalk spreading and clasping the main stem or trunk, which is covered by a fibrous network like burlap. The flowers are arranged on a spadix some five feet long, and are a delicate white. After the flowers come the nuts, too familiar to require description. Each spike of the flowers yields from ten to fifteen nuts. A healthy tree under forty years old can be counted on for 150 nuts annually, and 250 is not an extraordinary figure.

The principal products are the nuts, dried and raw; *copra*, which is the dried kernel, and makes a valuable oil; *poonac*, a residue left after the oil is pressed out, used to fatten cattle; *coir*, a fibre from the woody husk, and a number of bi-products, ranging from medicinal extracts and building materials to yarn, mats, and half a hundred lesser articles.

With the rich lowlands behind, the train dragged upward through the foothills, which were rounded and thrown one upon the other and all covered with tousled low greenery, from which emerged the stately tapering trunks of royal palms, scattered here and there, infinitely graceful as their white shafts lifted high their crowning mass of green plumes.

As we approached the serried peaks of the many mountains, imposing and beautiful as seen from the coast, their fascination increased. Beside Agua, there were Tajumulco, Tacana, Fuego, Pacaya, Ipala, and Santa Maria, to the north, whose eruption in 1902 inflicted great loss of life and property damage to the city of Quezaltenango, practically wiping out all the surrounding *fincas*. All the peaks named are volcanic, as is all Guatemala, a few of them are still "warm" and may perhaps come to destructive life at any time, and all of them are more than 11,000 feet in height, which hints that in Guatemala it is possible for the lover of mountaineering to get his fill of adventure.

Palin is a mid-afternoon station well up in the highlands, and there we had our first glimpse of

the prevalent type of Guatemalan Indian woman—there were men too, to be sure, but as it was a question of active vending at the train-side, and selling eatables means work, the men were in the shady background.

These women are very small and very strong. Their feet are tiny and their legs wonderfully well developed and practically tireless. They carry everything but their numerous babies on their heads, and as a result are as straight as arrows. The babies are swung in slings, which pass over one shoulder and under the opposite arm, so that they can be shifted to a position at the back or brought around to the breast as occasion demands. The women are barefooted and bareheaded. Their garments are three in number. First there is the *guipile*, an upper garment that is fashioned somewhat like a poncho, being little more than a square of cloth through a slit in which the head is thrust so that the *guipile* hangs across the shoulders and down to the waist. Secondly, there is a skirt, which is nothing more than a blanket brought around so tightly that it might have been the model for the hobble skirt; however, the Guatemalan skirt is so abbreviated that it inter-



Indian woman vending *dulces* at Palin



A Guatemalan Indian woman with the ever-present baby

feres not at all with foot freeness. The rest of the costume consists of a broad band or scarf bound about the waist, which forms a sort of connecting link between skirt and *guipile*. Often enough it is a "missing link," and then an unabashed zone of brown skin peers out between the gaily coloured garments. The kiddies wear a miniature replica of the "grown up" costume, always plus a delightfully pert little round cap about as big as a minute, that perches on their baby heads.

A cotton shirt and trousers are the sum and substance of the male Indian attire, with occasional more picturesque embellishments. In the hot country the garb gets down to a minimum. So much so, in fact, that Rufino Barrios, former dictator, once issued a decree compelling natives to wear a sufficient amount of clothing to meet the requirements of delicacy before entering a city. And so it is that even to-day one encounters pedestrians halting by the wayside at the city limits and adding a touch or two to their scanty attire. And even at that an Anthony Comstock might have his sensibilities outraged! Altogether these comic glimpses of roadside toilet-making

remind one of similar scenes in eastern Canada of a Sabbath, when the French Canadian youngsters, who have paddled through the dust for miles in bare feet, stop to put on "store shoes" before approaching the church; only the *voyageurs* of the Guatemalan roads go without for comfort's sake, while the *habitants* do so for economy.

These Indians comprise nine tenths of Guatemala's population, divided about equally between full bloods and *ladinos*, the latter having some Spanish blood in their veins and an accompanying pride which causes them to look down upon the racially pure Indians. The other tenth is Creole, and in its hands lies practically all the wealth, power, and lands of the so-called republic. A middle class is notable for its absence, and it is this lack, no doubt, that gives Guatemala its peculiar and far from healthy political and economic character.

From the standpoint of the picturesque the Indians are the very fibre of Guatemala. Of their social and political life a few words later on; here a paragraph or two concerning their appearance may be in place—for the memory of the ever-present brown men and women with their burdens is the

most vivid mental picture retained by one who has travelled in Guatemala.

The Indian is the carrier of the country—a very “common” common carrier, too. A poor second to him come the mule and burro.

They are called *cargadors*, and for a wage of a few cents a day will trot countless miles with a hundred pounds or more strapped to their backs or balanced on their heads. The *cargadors* are everywhere; not a road or a trail in the land that is free from them, and not an evening but the traveller finds them squatting beside their tiny fires cooking coffee and the inevitable *tortillas* and *frijoles* in the earthenware utensils that form an important item in their variegated cargoes.

In Salvador we had marvelled at the enormous burdens born by the poorer men and women, but in comparison with rural Guatemala, and especially the Guatemalan highlands, Salvador's human transportation freaks are insignificant.

A common method of carrying is by means of a wooden frame about two feet square and perhaps four feet high, which is strapped to the back and further supported by a band across the forehead, just as the “tumpline” is used in the far North;

the frames are packed to capacity with every conceivable thing, and sometimes are bound around for protection with matting. One of the articles chiefly carried is pottery, and it is quite ordinary to meet a little man shuffling along beneath a veritable pyramid of heavy earthenware pots, piled up perhaps five feet above his head and weighing all the way from one hundred to two hundred pounds. Behind him (as shown in an accompanying illustration) quite often trails a little boy, with a load proportionate to his years, and heavy enough at that, judging by the way the perspiration trickles down his grimy face and his eyes pop out under the strain of the galling "tumpline."

The women carry about as much as the men. They do not use the framework, which is called a *carcaste*, but if their load is more than can be balanced on their heads in baskets, it is strapped on their backs in a rough rope netting. It is extraordinary to watch them get into harness. I have seen a little weazened woman, who looked sixty,—and probably was thirty, for youth goes quickly in a land where children come early in the 'teens and life is spent entirely on the highroad,—lie down



Cargadors, father and son, carrying pottery



Having wriggled into her harness, this woman is getting to her feet with her great load of pottery

in a marketplace, wiggle her shoulders under the straps holding a great net of pottery, and then, with the "tumpline" cutting into her forehead, struggle to her feet with a burden that weighed at least one hundred pounds, and probably more. And off she went, on a journey of perhaps a dozen miles.

All the *cargadors*, male and female, go at a dog trot. There is no walking, but instead a swinging half-run, which eats up distance at a rate of some six miles an hour.

As our train progressed into higher altitudes and brought us nearer to Guatemala City, we gained our first impressions of the country and its people, so prominent among the latter being the Indian burden-bearers.

Even the brief glimpses from the train windows and at the numerous stops served as a trustworthy introduction to another side of Guatemalan conditions—the political. For it was apparent that the country is *militant*. Everywhere there were soldiers. Comparatively few, to be sure, when considered by groups, but numerous in the aggregate, and amply indicative of the fact that stability is maintained by an iron hand. They

are ill-clad little fellows, and ill-armed, these soldiers of Cabrera, but efficient for all that in their field. Like most Central American warriors their uniforms are of blue jeans; nearly all of them are barefoot, and most of them have at least one jaunty, if not a fear-inspiring, appurtenance to their military get-up in the shape of bright red trimmings to caps and coats. Their guns seem more valuable as antiques than anything else. Many of them have never discharged a weapon, which perhaps is as well for their own safety as for that of an enemy!

The officers who captained the groups of ragged soldiery along the railroad were piratical looking fellows, with ruffianly black beards and hard faces. However, the next strata of military officialdom is gaily plumed; the "generals" we saw at several stations along the route were gorgeously bedecked with gold braid and finery. At La Pedrera, I remember, we watched two such officers meet; the greeting of lovers long separated could not have been more affectionate. Arms about each other in a tight embrace they exchanged a smacking kiss upon the cheek. Altogether, it was quite impressive—and somewhat sickening for



Soldiers of Guatemala



A Guatemalan mother

an Anglo-Saxon, who inherits little patience for such procedure. However, they all do it, and the more gold braid the more "slushy" is the greeting, it seems. I snapped a photograph of two worthies in action, but did not manage to get it until after the kisses, when they were "breaking away," as a Yankee onlooker expressed it.

Guatemala has many beautiful lakes nestling throughout its uplands, whose scenery in itself offers enough enjoyment to repay a long pilgrimage. In the late afternoon the train brought us to Lake Amatitlan, along whose borders the track skirts after suddenly emerging from among the surrounding hills and out upon the shores, with their broad and wonderful vistas.

Amatitlan lies at an altitude of nearly two thousand feet, is twelve miles long and about three miles wide, and is emptied into the Pacific Ocean by the river Guastoya. Hovering close above it are the volcanoes of Agua and Fuego, while at the water's edge, close to the tracks, one may see women washing clothing in hot springs that boil up conveniently, leaving nothing to be desired but a rain of soap, as one writer remarks. There

is a curious annual phenomenon about the lake which occurs generally in March, when there is an eruption at its bottom after which great quantities of sulphur rise to the surface and thousands of fish are destroyed.

In south-western Guatemala is Lake Atitlan, the big brother of Amatitlan, situated at an altitude of five thousand feet in the heart of mountain fastnesses, ten miles wide and thirty miles in length. There are no known outlets to the lake, and despite scientific efforts to "plant" fish, none seem able to survive in its icy waters. The surroundings are described as fascinating from the standpoints of scenery and human and historic interest, and while reaching the lake is something of an undertaking, a trip to it is recommended for any one the length of whose Guatemalan visit will allow the excursion.

On the train I talked with an American, the president of a large sugar machinery manufacturing company. He was on his way to South America upon some business, and was looking over Guatemala in passing, for the Guatemalan sugar industry is rapidly becoming an important one.



“On the shores of Lake Amatitlan one may see women washing clothes in hot springs that boil up conveniently ”



“I snapped two worthies in action, but did not manage to get it until they were ‘ breaking away ’ ”

"Give the devil his due," was his recommendation in discussing local labour conditions and the universal poverty. "Guatemalan labour is not half as badly off as it looks. See—the men are always laughing. There is no depression such as you see in almost all tropical countries, where the labourer is little more than a slave. All your Guatemalan worker wants is enough 'white eye' to cheer him up."

Although not exactly a lofty viewpoint from which to consider the native *mozo's* condition, if one chooses to say that a *laissez-faire* policy is satisfactory, there is no doubt that the Guatemalan labourer's lot is about as happy as that of any other semi-barbarian of the Tropics, and perhaps happier. The key of the case is that he or she knows no other kind of life than that led, and knowing none is content with what Providence and the overlords provide.

The American manufacturer opened up vehemently upon the inefficiency of our schools when it comes to teaching foreign languages, calling our instruction methods farcical.

"Some weeks ago," he said, "we advertised for a salesman to work in Spanish countries. Of

forty-three applicants, thirty-eight were useless simply because they could n't speak Spanish decently. Every one of them thought he could, having been 'educated' in our college 'language courses.' Of the other five, four were n't competent salesmen. The fifth man got the job—*he had learned to speak Spanish in Germany!*"

The manufacturer had his son with him. He had taken the boy out of college—a large Eastern university—because no progress was being made in languages, so far as conversational ability was concerned, and in place of "Spanish 6" or "French 12B" at Harvard or Yale was planting him for a year in a South American city where his business colleagues handled the three languages indiscriminately and it would be a case of his conversationally swimming or sinking.

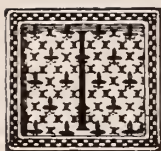
"Every German in tropical trade speaks French, English, and Spanish, and speaks it easily. They don't regard it as remarkable. What is the trouble? Is it that we Americans are naturally stupid and can't learn? Or are our teaching methods absurd?"

It was n't difficult to discover that he blamed the methods, and not the pupils. And this man,

who has for thirty years managed a large sales force of foreign-speaking Americans and English-speaking foreigners, should know something of what he was talking about.

CHAPTER XV

Guatemalan Glimpses



IN scenery and climate Guatemala is a pure delight. Politically and socially, it is a land of extraordinary contradictions.

On one hand stands a most liberal constitution, an enlightened code of laws, free speech, free press, an active congress, and a progressive educational system. There is luxury, wealth, and comfort. It is all quite idyllic.

But how different is the reverse side of the picture! The constitution is a farce, the laws are a travesty, free speech and free press are subject to the autocratic whims of the administration, the congress is no better—nay, worse—than so many manikins, and the vaunted educational system is a giddy burlesque. The luxury is ephemeral, the wealth is mortgaged. Rub the gilt off, and Guatemala, at close range, is a sad sight—the saddest on our hemisphere, for the

heritage God gave the land is bountiful beyond belief.

You may see whichever side of the picture you choose. No—not quite that, for if you merit official attention you will certainly be shown the bright side, while the dark will be disclosed only through your own efforts. But the latter is easily discovered.

We had a preliminary glimpse of the dark side down at San José. Among our fellow guests at the Playa Hotel were an old man and his family, consisting of his wife and three daughters. Presumably they were on a holiday, vacationing at the beach. Only they were anything but vacationers in appearance, for there never was a more sepulchral looking lot; they might have been mourners. Furthermore, they were surrounded by a baffling air of mystery, for no one seemed disposed to vouchsafe any information concerning them.

Finally, an American told the old man's story: He had just been released from prison after a four-years confinement, and now, with his family, was enjoying his first week of freedom—an "enjoyment" dismally tempered by fear and the certain

knowledge that every act was watched and probably every word reported by spies. On April 29, 1907, President Cabrera was driving; his carriage stopped; a bomb exploded beneath it. Only the driver had failed to place his charge exactly at the intended spot, and instead of the vehicle and Cabrera being blown into eternity the bomb exploded under the horse, killing it and the driver, and partially wrecking the carriage, from which the dictator emerged unscathed. In a coat pocket of the dead coachman, among other papers, was found a check for an inconsiderable amount endorsed by the old man whom we saw at San José. That was enough. On that "evidence" he was thrown into prison and remained there for four years. We were told that there was no trial and that the culprit showed the check had no possible connection with the crime.

"But then," as a good Guatemalan explained, "he was lucky to get off as easily as he did."

The freed prisoner was not allowed to leave the country. Indeed, few who have felt the iron hand of the dictator are permitted to become *emigrados*, for then sympathy might be stirred up abroad and unfortunate aftermaths result. While there

was a steamer in the offing, even the daughters were not permitted to accept an invitation to sail about in a launch.

In Guatemala City we tramped around extensively; I used my notebook and camera and made no pretence of masking my interest in the people and the places, and in my room I was usually busy with my portable typewriter.

"Of course you know you are being watched?" an American asked me.

I laughed. It seemed improbable, for aside from the fact that every one has to give his name to a soldier or a very plain "plain clothes" man at the railroad depots, there is little evidence of surveillance, and no difficulty whatever, so far as foreigners are concerned.

But one afternoon I returned with unexpected suddenness to our room at the Gran Hotel to get a forgotten roll of films. The windows faced a narrow roof above the interior courtyard. As I opened the door a ragged fellow had the sash of one of these windows up and with one foot across the sill was intently examining the typewriter and the pile of papers beside it. Seeing me almost immediately he beat a retreat so speedily that

before I could get around to the court he had completely vanished. It was inside the hotel, and I knew the chance was slim that the interloper was a thief, for an outsider would have found it hard to get there, and still more difficult to quietly melt away. I called the proprietor and demanded an explanation. Of course, nothing came of it other than that he was fittingly grieved and shocked and apologetic, in broken English, and to prove his position summoned all the *mozos* connected with the establishment who might have been prowling around. None of them was my man.

Telephones are barred so far as long distance use is concerned, because it is not always possible to keep track of 'phoned conversations, especially if varied languages are employed. I was told by an authority (an American business man who sends scores of messages weekly) that every telegram of any possible importance, and every cable, is read and recorded by an official. Code messages are not encouraged, and if one tries them persistently they are apt to be delayed unaccountably.

Those are hints of what goes on beneath the surface.

The other side—the official side—is admirably illustrated by the stately Manuel Estrada Cabrera Temple of Minerva at the Hippodrome. It is an impressive structure of classic design, and, at least on superficial observation, is a striking tribute to a high order of artistic appreciation and progressive national expenditure. Every year there are elaborate festival entertainments focusing around this majestic temple which is so extraordinarily out of keeping with its environment, when the school children of the capital parade and perform, all accompanied by a vast deal of pretty show and pomp, a vast deal of oratory about education and progress, and a vast deal of applause by every one for the great benefactor Cabrera. The administration foots the bills. That is the annual highwater mark of “progress and education.”

There are other temples of Minerva, of lesser magnitude, here and there throughout the country. They are striking—by contrast with their environment, at the least—but aside from standing as monuments to the everlasting glory of their creator Cabrera, they seem worthless extravagances—extravagance in a land where civilisation has slowly slipped backward for the last half-century.

The schools are the boast of the government and are the one great "play" when officialdom desires to impress visitors with the tender regard the administration entertains for its constituency. There is, or was, the Manuel Estrada Cabrera Normal School and the Manuel Estrada Cabrera Industrial School. It is not possible to speak with authority, because opportunity to get first-hand information is scant, but from what we could see and learn the educational system exists chiefly on paper. For instance, one great building—it is to be the Manuel Estrada Cabrera something-or-other—is half completed. It has been under construction for years; a fortune has been spent upon it, in a haphazard way; apparently it never will be finished, and even if it should be there is no tangible clue as to what can be done with it or whence would come the pupils to enjoy its proposed advantages. Nobody cares; and, of course, no one asks questions or ventures opinions.

Few, if any, know how many soldiers Guatemala has, and probably even the dictator himself has no exact knowledge on this head. Suffice to say that squads of the dusky, blue-jeaned, barefoot little fellows are for ever parading the streets,



In the Minerva Temple, Guatemala City



The Guatemalan women balance burdens on their heads

that bugle calls resound, and that sentries sprout on every other corner of the capital. Next to parading, the chief duty of the military seems to be guarding prisoners; one constantly encounters groups of half a dozen soldiers guarding one poor devil of a half-starved ragamuffin, who works upon the roads while his captors surround him.

Cabrera is never seen. It is said that for at least two years he has not appeared upon the streets, excepting only the time when Secretary Knox was an official visitor. Of that visit in the summer of 1912, William Bayard Hale, who accompanied the diplomatic party, writes:

"Guatemala is the giant among the republics of the Central Continent. It has long been the ambition of her rulers to swallow up the others—the five nations were one previous to 1838. A *junta*, ambitious to reunite them, maintains an active campaign from Guatemala City. El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua were united under Policarpo Bonilla, 1895–1898, but Guatemala has not yet had the strength to assert her purpose. Manuel Estrada Cabrera seated himself in the presidency of Guatemala in 1898, the year that General Regaldo of Salvador broke up Policarpo

Bonilla's Union. Estrada Cabrera has been for fourteen years building up the most absolute dictatorship ever accomplished on this continent (except by Diaz in Mexico), with the ultimate purpose ever in his mind of making one empire of Central America.

"I have broken bread and drunk wine and talked philosophy with Estrada Cabrera, and I would rather speak of his devotion to education (which is fervent, if his eloquence convinces you) and his taste in art (which is severely classical) than of the methods by which he wields absolute sway over his million subjects—three quarters of them Indian or half-caste like himself. Twice they have come near murdering him: once a bomb blew up the street just ahead of his carriage; once a body of his own cadets opened fire on him in the palace. Awful is Guatemala vengeance. Estrada Cabrera had not left his palace except by an underground passage to a neighbouring house for many months before Mr. Knox visited his capital. Then he was seen in several places, closely guarded; among other places, at the American Legation, where he attended dinner. But when the hour of departure came, the President's state carriage

with its jingling horses and its cavalry escort rolled away—empty—and two minutes later the President came out quickly, jumped into a dilapidated hack, and went home by a side street.”

Carriages are not permitted to pass through the streets upon which the palace faces. As for getting a personal interview, I was told by the United States officials that to arrange such would be next to impossible. Apparently the last writer the President granted a presentation, Frederick Palmer, had the hardihood to see that he was supposed not to have seen and subsequently to have written the unvarnished truth. The experience had permanently soured Cabrera. While I was unable to get a first-hand glimpse of the dictator himself, the following admirable word-picture from the pen of Mr. Hale in a *World's Work* article presents him as he was described to me by those who knew him well:

“He looks like Diaz of Mexico, except that his expression is livelier. His figure is sturdy, his head large, with a high forehead; he has a double chin and a heavy iron-grey moustache. In repose his face is not unamiable, but all manner of storms, volcanoes, and lightnings dwell in his half-shut

eyes. No human face that I have ever seen compares with Estrada Cabrera's—unless Mr. Roosevelt's—in capability of passionate play, of swift intensity. In an instant it is transformed with truly terrific energy, the eyes darting commands and hurling threats. His people stand about him watching for any slightest gesture of the finger, any premonitory suggestion of a lifting eyelid. Time and again we saw him control all the details of elaborate functions with scarcely perceptible glances and movements of the hand. People came and went, rose up and sat down, were pleased or were indifferent, as he indicated; at the least tardiness or failure to understand, rage fairly transfixed his countenance for a dreadful second."

Everything in Guatemala is conducted on the spoils system, only as there is but one party, and that party is always in power, naturally it is not a matter of competing for the jobs and the spoils, but rather of keeping the "graft" upon a profitable business basis. "A political job in the hand is worth a dozen honest ones," is a local adaptation not inappropriate.

Salaries are absurd. The President is allowed \$5000 a month, Guatemalan money, or about one

eighteenth of that amount in our currency. The *jefe politico* is the political mainspring of the country. There are twenty-three of them, at the head of each of the departments into which Guatemala is divided, over which they are governors—"political heads," literally. Below them are the *alcaldes*, or mayors of the local municipalities. The salary of a *jefe politico* is supposed to be \$250 a month, Guatemalan money.

"What salary does a judge receive?" I once asked.

"As much as he can get," was the prompt answer.

And so with the *jefes*. They get what they can—and that usually is a tidy little sum, if reports are to be credited. For instance, they are the clearing houses for labour. When a *finquero* wants labourers he does not go out and get them, for the very good and sufficient reason that there are none to be had that way. Instead, he goes to his *jefe*, or perhaps to the *alcalde*, and states his needs, which are forthwith provided—for a consideration. The usual price for day labour is three *pesos*, or about seventeen cents. (In remote districts it is as low as one *peso*.) Half of this goes

to the *jefe*. It is said that each active *jefe* controls 1200 labourers, so it is evident that a profitable field of endeavour lies in this direction.

The labourers themselves are between the devil and the deep sea. As long as they stay on a *finca*, they are safe and may depend with some certainty upon receiving the necessities and some of the joys of life. However, once they leave, they are at the mercy of the authorities and probably face an alternative of being impressed into the payless army or of having themselves again turned over to another master, while the *jefe* retains the commission for the transaction.

While it is said that peonage no longer exists in Guatemala, it actually does, to all intents and purposes. The keynote of the system is that a labourer may not leave a plantation if he is in debt to his employer—which he invariably is. For instance, along comes a marriage, a funeral, or something that requires special celebration; if nothing better turns up, there are always the numberless church and national holidays and *fiesta* times. Straightway the *mozo* borrows money from his master. After that, he is never out of debt, if for no other reason than that the

employer keeps the accounts and has the purchased backing of the local *jefe* or *alcalde*. As a matter of fact, the labourer is content; he is better off steadily employed, is far less liable to get into serious trouble than if rambling at his own free will, and above all has a real sense of affiliation with the estate where he works, which becomes his protected home. The permanency of the system is indicated by the fact that a man's offspring and relatives inherit his debt should he die.

Here is the general text of a contract often signed by employees, wherein they bind themselves:

"1. To discharge with his work daily and personally the debt contracted on his *finca*.

"2. To do every class of work after the customs established on the *finca*.

"3. To absent himself from the *finca* on no pretext without previous permission in writing.

"4. To pay all expenses made necessary in case of flight, and rendering himself subject to the proceedings brought against him through the proper authority.

"5. To remain on the *finca* eleven months of each year.

"6. To subject himself to all articles of the law of labourers decreed by the government. (Which means that he must remain so long as the *finquero* says he is in debt.)

"7. The loan is given not to the man, but to his entire family; and each and every one will be individually responsible for what they receive.

"8. The *mozo* who becomes security for another *mozo* (be it man or woman) assumes the same responsibilities as the one who receives the loan."

The most ludicrous (or is it the most pathetic?) of the sidelights upon Guatemalan democracy concerns the presidential "election." The constitution calls for one every four years. A constitution must be respected, especially if it happens to be a really admirable one. So every four years there is an election. Manuel Estrada Cabrera became President in 1898, and he has been re-elected regularly at lawful intervals since. The method is simplicity itself. In the first place, it is a "real election"; ballots actually are cast and probably a great many of them are counted; indeed, the official "count" of a recent election exceeded in number the total estimated population of the entire country! Then the result is announced:

after the last election the delighted and doubtless surprised patriot, again returned to office by an admiring constituency, forthwith proclaimed the fact in cablegrams to all the governments of the two continents. One of the features of the election is that crowds of Indians are marched by soldiers from one polling place to another, all of whom loyally cast their ballots for Cabrera. One reason—beside the soldiers—is that he is the only candidate!

A little less than a century ago Guatemala was the capital country of all Central America. To-day it is the dominating factor in the international political life of the isthmian lands, and it is common knowledge that so far as Cabrera's own desires are concerned, could they be put into execution, Guatemala would again stand at the head of a federation.

Spain held domain over Central America from 1524 until 1821, and Guatemala was the central scene of the Spanish rule. From the first named date—that which marked the initial Spanish conquests in the New World—until September of 1810 the rule of Spain was practically undisputed, for while on one side there was abuse of power and

on the other resulting resentment, nothing even approaching a systematic attempt to gain independence occurred during the three centuries when all this territory was as completely dominated by the Spanish Cortes and the Spanish crown as was any province of the then great monarchy.

It was in 1810 that Mexico first threw off the Spanish yoke, under the leadership of the patriot-priest Hidalgo, and thereafter the seeds of rebellion, long sown, sprouted and came to a head with rapidity. The following year, 1811, saw real rebellion, whose blossoming was preceded by *pronunciamentos* and followed by bloodshed and misery. That second decade of the last century was a sad one for Guatemala's patriots, though its tragedies were tempered by the slow successes of the movement whose ultimate result was the governmental divorce of Central America from the mother country, the latter by then a land impoverished physically and politically as the results of the Napoleonic cataclysms and the wave of rebellion that was sweeping broadcast and tearing the children colonies of the old-world monarchies from their parents.

Spain's struggle to retain her rights in Guate-

mala were feeble, and finally, on the 14th of September, 1821, Señor Gavino Gainza, representative of the Crown, having cast his lot with the rebellion, a great meeting was held in Guatemala City and an *Acta de Independencia* adopted. In March of the following year a *junta* was formed and a nominally republican government launched. In the same year, 1822, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica also declared their independence "for better or for worse"; for the first and the last named the change was for the better, and ever since has remained so; for the others, "independence" ushered in a century of political misery, wherein the harsh hand of Spanish rule was supplanted by a succession of harsher domestic tyrannies, some of them operating under the name of democracy and others seeking no apology for their baneful existence.

About a year later a union with Mexico was effected and remained in force for some fifteen months. The next experiment in international relationship was a union of the Central American countries which resulted in little but chaos, from the midst of which emerged Francisco Morazan, who became President of the federation in 1830.

Two years later, after countless minor revolts and an incessant struggle chiefly centring about the clergy and complicated by endless local jealousies, the federation practically dissolved. In 1837 Morazan abandoned Guatemala and finally met death in an unsuccessful revolutionary attempt in Costa Rica.

Rafael Carrera was the next dictator of Guatemala, and a vicious, iron-handed one he proved himself until death terminated his "presidential term" in 1865. Next came a colourless leader named Vicente Cerna, who was ousted by Granados, the latter being more or less regularly succeeded by J. Rufino Barrios in 1872. Barrios, although a dictator in every sense of the word, did much for Guatemala, encouraging development and education. He was a bitter enemy of the church and ruthlessly confiscated its properties and destroyed its powers, so far as he was able. His great ambition was the establishment of a Central American union, with Guatemala at its head. The scheme accomplished nothing but bloodshed. When Barrios invaded Salvador to compel it to join the proposed union, he was shot and killed in an engagement, and with him died all hope of the union.

Manuel Lisandro Barillas withdrew after a brief presidential experience and was followed by José Maria Reina Barrios, a nephew of Rufino Barrios. In February, 1898, he was assassinated on the streets of Guatemala City, and forthwith was succeeded by Manuel Estrada Cabrera, who was the *premier designado*, or vice-president.

Since then Cabrera has held almost undisputed sway. Excepting only the several occasions upon which his people have narrowly missed assassinating him, his position has never been seriously assailed, despite minor revolutionary attempts.

"Cabrera can never be put out. He has Guatemala in the palm of his hand. There is no power in the land that could seriously menace him."

Such is the opinion of a dozen men in Guatemala to-day, who know whereof they speak.

One of three things alone can end his rule. The first is death; it may come at any time. Secondly, Cabrera, following the example of Castro or Zelaya, may resign his position and decamp to Europe; that course holds at least a promise of some peaceful enjoyment of the fortune he has squeezed from his country. Or, thirdly, another nation may see to it that his rule ends. Such action

can never originate from a Central American neighbour, for no one of them is powerful enough. Apparently no European power can oust Cabrera, even if it would, thanks to the threadbare Monroe Doctrine which forbids interference from across the seas.

Is it possible, then, that the United States will some day grasp the great Cabrera by the seat of his official trousers and cast him forth? It is doubtful. Assuredly that time will never come until we accept far more fully than we ever yet have done the responsibilities of the protecting doctrine we have so tenderly wrapped around our little brothers of the southland. In Guatemala it is said—and the assertion holds water—that if our government does not actually stand directly behind Cabrera it certainly seems to do so. There can be no doubt that very recently revolutionary movements directed against neighbouring republics have been hatched in Guatemala, fathered by Cabrera, and that our officials knew of them and took no action to stamp them out. Nor is it a matter of doubt that if ever a promising revolt against Cabrera himself should spring to life the United States promptly would see that it was crushed.

"So what can we do? We are helpless. Your great republic is the strongest support Cabrera has," said a wealthy Guatemalan, who hates the dictator heartily.

And Heaven only knows what will happen when Cabrera goes, no matter how he goes. Guatemala will be a chaos, for it seems fair to believe that in such an event, unless external assistance be rendered, there is no party or no man powerful enough to control the turbulent affairs of state. The present *status quo* is far from admirable, but at least it is possible. It is perhaps a matter of the advisability of discarding known difficulties for those that are unknown. One must admit that Cabrera preserves order. The dove of peace has hovered over the land for a dozen years; whose business is it if the poor bird is obliged to wear a bomb-proof union suit?

CHAPTER XVI

The Capital City



O city in Central America possesses more charm or diversified interest than Guatemala's capital. It is the largest of them all, and the oldest. Its lofty location—on a plateau five thousand feet above the ocean—gives it a climate that combines the rare delights of the balmy Tropics with the invigorating breath of the cooler temperate climes. Historically it is a treasure-trove. Scenically, its setting is superb. From the standpoint of civilisation it is a cross-roads of the centuries; the peon Mayan-Quiché Indian, descended from the prehistoric rulers of the land, carries his burden over the rough-cobbled streets; nearby, on the diminutive sidewalk, is his brother, now a ragged soldier, bearing a new-model rifle purchased from the blood-fund of the republic; between the two passes a German drummer, the essence of modern nattiness; an ox-cart turns out

to give an automobile passageway; an American ranch owner rubs elbows with a cowled priest; yonder is the magnificent shell of a school building, and across the way a grim-walled, iron-barred barracks. Everywhere there is impressive poverty—an uncomplaining poverty. Here and there is pretentious wealth—a dissatisfied wealth. It is the city of contradictions.

Guatemala City dates from the time of our North American independence, having been founded in 1776 after the destruction by earthquake of the original capital, some thirty miles distant, three years before. The city lies in the palm of a glorious valley, rimmed by emerald hills and guarded by impressive mountain peaks. It was “made to order” and shows it; there are no haphazard streets or winding ways that “just grew,” like Topsy, but instead an orderly plan was followed, with here and there an open plaza and with all the streets at right angles to one another and dividing off blocks of equal size. The avenues, *avenidas*, lie north and south, the *calles* (streets) east and west.

I know of no better introduction to the city than to go from the Gran Hotel of a morning to

the neighbouring height where stands the church of El Carmen and whence a comprehensive view of the capital and all the plateau land is spread before one.

The city covers an area about two miles square. Its buildings are low and compact—a lesson learned from previous seismic disasters—roofed with red and brown tiles, and walled with variously tinted and usually soiled 'dobe. While the colour is far from as richly warm as that of similar Spanish cities, it at least offers a multitude of delicate chromatic contrasts of whites, pale blues, ochres, pinks, and dingy reds that blend delightfully with their setting of sunlit countryside, with its green fields and gay human colour daubs, while the pale blue volcanic cones frame in the near distance, their outlines melting into the ethereal bluest-blue of the cloud-flecked heavens. From the low sea of roofs rise the few lofty buildings, doubly imposing in contrast with their lowly neighbours. There are the double towers of the cathedral and the domes and spires of lesser churches; here and there a squat square building stands out above the general level, probably a barracks; far across, on an opposite eminence, is the Castillo de San José



Cargadors in the city streets



Church of El Carmen, Guatemala City

with walls and towers and a moat, long dry, and (as we later saw) a number of cannon all facing cityward, unconscious evidence of the fact that far greater danger exists within than is feared from without.

El Carmen is venerable indeed. Its bell bears the date of 1748. The massive old church has more the appearance of a fortress than of a place of worship, and no doubt in its youth—a youth that saw Spain in its glory and antedated the freedom struggle of the thirteen colonies—the *padres* that ruled its destinies manipulated a flint-lock as handily as they could rattle off a prayer or chant a *Te Deum*. The church stands upon a knoll clean of other buildings, whose grassy slopes sweep down to an unattractive quarter of the city on one hand, and on the other merge into the open country, with its dusty roads, high walls, lowly houses, and patches of rich cultivation. A toy street car line comes from the heart of the city to the base of the hill.

The Plaza de Armas is the central square of Guatemala City. In it is a pretty park, some odds and ends of statuary including a work that portrays Columbus rather precariously perched upon

a globe, and the inevitable band-stand. The music of the capital, by the way, is excellent. It has, if anything, more of the military character than that encountered in the other capitals as there is more of brass and drum and stirring fieriness. That is true also of the national life itself.

On one side of the plaza is the cathedral, with broad stone steps, two ponderous towers, massive pillars *en façade*, and a general air of overelaborateness. In front are four weather-beaten statues, presumably of the Evangelists, but disfigured beyond individual recognition, as a heavy rainfall plays havoc even with an evangelist's features when they are of soft, coarse stone. At the side of the cathedral is the Episcopal Palace, a low, substantial structure.

The plaza is flanked on the north by the municipal building, always with a bevy of soldiery fluttering about it. A few blocks away are the palace and the home of the President, both of one story and neither remarkable. The most imposing building in the city, excepting the cathedral, is the Teatro Colon, the national theatre, a dignified structure, built upon the model of the Madeleine Church in Paris. The *teatro* walls are of

stucco and plaster; within, the theatre is a very creditable affair with an ample stage and a generous seating capacity. Its activities are in a great measure supported by a government subsidy, thanks to which it often boasts excellent operatic and dramatic talent from Spain and Mexico.

The streets are for the most part narrow and paved, where paved at all, with large rough cobbles. There always seems to be some paving that is undergoing repairs, the result being far from satisfactory, so far as getting about is concerned. At the time of our visit there was talk of new paving, to be done by contract with an American firm; also of proposed electric lines. Such projects, it seems, have been discussed more than once, and may be threshed out for some years yet before they become realities.

The American Club is a pleasant social centre for foreigners, and there one may meet men of all nations, some of whom have witnessed, on an intimate footing, the tragedies and the comedies that crowded the national stage during the closing quarter of the last century. But the tales they tell are guarded, for even to-day and among friends,

it is not well to speak too freely of several matters in Guatemala City.

One of the delightful social side issues that open up for a guest in the capital is that offered by the tennis club, an organisation whose membership embraces several nationalities and which gets a vast deal of healthy enjoyment from its tennis courts. There one may play the game in almost climatic perfection during the months that New Englanders are buffeting blizzards. But comparatively cool and bracing as is the climate, one quickly discovers that one's appetite for strenuous exercise outdistances physical ability, for even in these refreshing highlands one's physical ambition "runs down" with surprising ease. "Take it easy," is good advice that is gladly obeyed.

(Baedeker has not yet invaded Guatemala. In fact, there is no "guide-book" worthy of the name, which is a matter of supreme satisfaction; for who would not rather unearth "finds" for himself than have them thrust at him all tabulated and appraised and with a symbolic number of asterisks dictating exactly the amount of enthusiasm and attention it is fitting to lavish upon the thing



The unique concrete relief map of Guatemala



The Teatro Colon, Guatemala's national theatre

or place catalogued? All of which is injected here for fear that some one might think these rambling chapters an attempted catalogue of "things to be seen." They are nothing of the kind. It would be far better to sit in the market-place and get on intimate visual terms with the Indian *cargadors* than to thresh about "seeing" the "important" things. In travel, the *important* things are the things seen; there are no others.)

Then there is the great relief map of Guatemala, which is an immeasurable surprise. It covers nearly an acre of ground and is fashioned in concrete, depicting the entire country in a most graphic and unique manner. The mountains—with contour lines indicated—are there, the rivers, valleys, and plains, and on the east and west are the oceans, sure-enough watery oceans. The general character of the country is indicated by the colouring, and railroads and waggon roads are mapped in, all with considerable accuracy. The administering of a *pourboire* to the antique caretaker will tempt him to turn on water that flows forth from the miniature mountain tops and down the furrowed streams into the "oceans,"—a very pretty mechanical trick well worth the few pennies

the exhibition costs. All in all, the *mapa* is an admirable institution, and one that well might be an example for more progressive countries, for in its field the idea cannot be excelled either for geographical, educational, or general publicity value. By studying that map for half an hour the visitor gets a very good and certainly an extremely graphic mental picture of all Guatemala; it gives a better conception of the general "lie of the land" than can be secured from a dozen printed maps and pages of description, written or spoken. Of course upon a far smaller scale the plan is used by educators, but is there anywhere such another great physical picture of a country? Some day one of our western States will utilise the plan.

I have spoken of the streets being paved with large cobbles. These usually are sloped toward the centre, so that what gutter there is occupies the middle of the street. Guatemala City, dry and sunny in January, is anything but dry at the height of the rainy season, and then the streets are torrents, over which, at the principal corners, miniature bridges are constructed for pedestrians. A quaint little legend concerns the coming of the

rainy season. It relates that on October fourth St. Francis once went abroad and beat evil-doers with the girdle of his robe; the result was many tears—so many, that the highways were flooded with them. And so that day came to be known as San Francisco Day, and now, if report is to be believed, the rainy season always starts promptly on October fourth, when the first tears of heaven flood the streets of the capital and put an end to the long dry time.

Guatemala City is a metropolis of door knockers. Every entranceway, from the highest to the lowliest, boasts a knocker. Many of them are unique and quite desirable from the standpoint of northern taste. Just now there is one of them upon my desk, holding down a pile of photographs which some day may see the light of publication, with editorial grace. It is of brass; a well-modelled hand, suspended from the wrist, grasps a ball; fastened to some door in far-away Guatemala, hundreds upon hundreds of human hands have lifted it. Indeed (the thought is scurrilous!), a score or two of knavish bill collectors or other vermin may have brazenly banged it a generation or two ago, and perhaps been answered (we hope)

by an experienced door-boy who lied in charming Spanish: "Sorry, sir, he is not at home."

Be all that as it may, that old battered knocker has a modern history just as doubtless there are tales it could tell of its own tropical past. An important portion of our time in Guatemala City was dedicated to what we came to call the "Quest of the Elusive Knocker." It was an amusing incident, and came about in detail somewhat in this wise:

K., an American friend who spoke Spanish, was with us. He pledged himself to secure a knocker—an old one, from the door of an old house. K., my wife, and I started to track that knocker to its lair. We found an abundance of lairs, but the difficulty always was to separate the lair from the knocker, so to speak. Say we spotted a prize on some heavy, studded door. We approached with studied innocence; K. rapped.

"Ah, Señorita!" K. would exclaim. "Is Señor Morales at home?"

Of course, he was n't, for the very good reason that he did n't live there. But K. was good looking and well spoken, and the rest of us remained in the bashful background.



A street in Guatemala City



When the rent is not paid a body is thrown out from the graveyard

"Too bad! Too bad indeed," the wily K. would then continue musingly. "Strange, Señor Morales assured me this was his address. Let me see—" here the gay deceiver consulted a notebook—"Yes, here it is. Number 19, this street. And he particularly mentioned the knocker. A rare old brass knocker, he said.—Ah, what a splendid one you yourself have——"

More in this vein. Perhaps Señorita warmed up; perhaps she did n't. Every experiment brought different results. But each time, when the crucial question came up: Would it be possible to purchase the beautiful knocker? the answer was negative; sometimes smilingly, occasionally brusquely, once offensively negative, but always decisively.

So it went. We tramped through many a *calle* and along many an *avenida*, for, of necessity, our calls in one neighbourhood were limited. Altogether, the little farce was most enjoyable, and in its making we saw much of the city at close range and glimpsed the interior of half a score of homes. Our farce had a happy ending; that is a rule for any really good one. And the ultimate reward of persistency was the brass-hand knocker that lies

close to my typewriter as I put down these words. It cost five Guatemalan dollars—twenty-five of our cents.

While Mexico alone of our western continent countries rightfully can be called a land of the bull-fight, Guatemala at least has the instincts for bull-fighting. In the capital there is a large bull ring pretty well equipped and actively used during the winter months. We failed to see a "real" fight, but we did view a rough-and-tumble bull-baiting, which lacked the cruelty of a fight, while retaining most of its interesting features and adding to them much that was amusing.

Fiestas are held at Guardia Viejo, a suburb of Guatemala City, and there we went one Sunday afternoon, choosing a carriage—a very formal landeau—as our vehicle in preference to the cheese-box street car with its two-mule-power locomotion and a railroad train densely packed with festival humanity. We found Guardia Viejo, consisting chiefly of a very wide street flanked with low buildings. Outside the latter were booths with things to eat and drink, and games to play, most of them games of chance; inside were other eating places, more expensive and perceptibly

cleaner, and more games, also more expensive. In one hall a *marimba* played for a company of dancers, and its queer, lilting, lively music floated out through the narrow windows and on to the crowded, dusty street.

The *marimba* is a musical instrument peculiarly Central American, and is encountered far more often in Guatemala than in any of the other lands. It is fashioned somewhat on the order of a xylophone, the sounds being produced by striking strips of wood below which are resonators of wood or hide. The strips extend along a frame six or more feet in length, behind which usually three—or even four—performers stand, each with two sticks, not unlike drumsticks, in each hand, with which he strikes the “keys.” With no music to guide them, and little or no training, the performances of the *marimba* musicians are remarkable for their excellence and especially for the almost perfect time kept by the three independent performers even in very rapid and complicated pieces. As regards the general effect of the *marimba* music, it is hard to improve this description: “It is like several pianos and harps combined, together with a bass effect not unlike a bass viol.” One sees the

instruments everywhere, and even on the most remote roads and trails, it is common enough to find a band of three bare-legged fellows trotting along, taking turn and turn about in carrying their portable orchestra.

For us the feature of that *fiesta* was the bull-baiting. A section of the broad street had been fenced off, and there the crude entertainment was enacted, to the huge enjoyment of the tatterdemalion crowd that thronged every possible vantage point, not neglecting even the few dwarfed trees in the arena itself, into whose branches a few enterprising early-comers swarmed—and remained, you may be sure, while the bull pranced about just beneath them!

A bugle called, and out came the bull from a small corral in the corner of the arena. The crowd hooted, the bull snorted, and a ragged *matador* pranced up and waved a bright shawl in the animal's face. Forthwith the bull charged—and had the doubtful satisfaction of impaling the shawl upon his horns, instead of the nimble-footed *matador*. That was the game, over and over again. There were rather too many men in the "ring" to make it good baiting, for so many annoyances



Manuel Estrada Cabrera Temple of Minerva, Guatemala



Bull-baiting at Guardia Viejo

were thrust at him that the bull could not conscientiously concentrate upon any single enemy. But even at that he scored some victories; on half a dozen occasions his horns made connection with his tormentors, usually in the neighbourhood of the seat of their trousers, and then a bold *matador* pirouetted in the air, to the great joy of the onlookers, who liked nothing better than to see the baiters discomfited. Of course this was a comparatively mild-mannered bull, and nothing worse was done than to annoy him; but even at that he became a very mad bull. So it was curious to see him when he did get a tormentor on the ground; once the man was down, and lay perfectly still, the bull lost all interest in him; instead of horning him, or trampling him, the instant a *matador* had fallen the bull paid no further attention to him, immediately turning to the others. Doubtless their known safety was the reason for the comparative courage of the baiters.

But truth to tell, most of it was "Dutch courage," for the wine that is red figured largely in the proceedings of the day. "White eye" is the local name of the national—ininitely cheap—intoxicant which is specially popular at *fiesta* times.

In time, the baiting tamed. Then one daring individual, fortified by "white eye," essayed to ride that bull, who by now, though tired, was truly "as mad as a bull." After a laborious lassoing, which was accomplished as clumsily as could be imagined, the bull was snubbed close to a tree, and the rider made his preparations to mount. Just then some one insulted his bullship too grossly with a sharp stick, and all at once by a gigantic effort accompanied by a mighty bellowing he was free, amidst a cloud of dust, overturned humanity, and explosive profanity. With a bellow the bull singled out as a victim the would-be rider, and made after him. He knew what he wanted by now, did that bull, and it very clearly was the gore of that individual. The efforts of gallant *matadors* to divert his attention availed nothing—Mr. Bull directed every faculty to the task of making connections with that particular human pest. The two—beast and man—cavorted around the arena, the former charging, the latter dodging, one furious, the other by now thoroughly frightened. All at once the man slipped—the bull all but got him—a matter of a few inches. Then the fugitive lost the last shreds of his nerve, and

made for the fence with all sails set, yelling mightily and intimately pursued by the bull. The man got there first—again a matter almost of inches—and was dragged over. But that bull was persistent; a fence appeared a trivial matter to him, and with a mighty crash he tore into it. The fence crumpled; the crowd disintegrated like dust; under horses' feet they went pellmell, trampling each other, climbing poles, trees, and walls; a dozen swarmed over our carriage. It was an indescribable mêlée and a glorious victory for the bull, who clattered off down the undisputed street like a vigorous tornado.

Later I saw a cockfight in a cockpit tucked away inside a patio, and a cruel affair it was, for in Guatemala the "sportsmen" are not content to have the birds fight with the spurs nature has given them, but add razor-sharp little blades which are fastened to the cocks' legs. Thanks to those the fights are horribly bloody and last but a few minutes, when one of the birds is pretty sure to be nearly cut to pieces.

After witnessing a couple of Guatemalan bouts I could not but compare them with fights seen in Panama. At best cockfights are degrading

spectacles, but despite all that justly can be said against them, it must be admitted that there is a thrill about them. The best fights at Panama are, I suppose, as little cruel and revolting as a cockfight can be. More than that, some of them come precious close to being real "sporting" events with plenty of give-and-take chance and a decided (and astonishing) element of human cunning about the battle methods of the ringsters.

Concerning one Panamanian fight I find this description in my notebook; it at least shows that there are uncertainties connected with cock-fighting.

"Owners appear with the birds, hidden away in feed bags or elaborate cloth coverings. They are handled with all the care and caution which is not bestowed upon the naked youth of the community, who are permitted to do as heaven and their own sweet will dictate, while their parents are caring for the more pressing wants of their favourite game birds.

"This is the first real sporting feature of the cock-fight, this matching of unknown birds. The two who are to fight are selected simply by their weight. Many are tried on the official scales until two are

found who exactly tip off each other, or until the respective owners are satisfied. So there is no telling whom your pet chanticleer will draw. His adversary may be an old-time champion, with a score of bloody and profitable victories to his credit, or he may be some green youngster who will turn tail and give up the ghost after the first set-to.

“But they make their bets just the same, owner against owner, irrespective of what cocks are to fight. And, indeed, the owners themselves do not know until after the bags have been opened and the birds are taken out to be preened and ‘rubbed down’ for the combat.

“In brief, there was a red gamester and a dun fighter. One we christened Red Head and the other Sandy. From the start Red had his adversary guessing. He parried and thrust, and side-stepped and feinted, with practised skill. He was scientific to the very end of his tail feathers. Sandy, on the other hand, was a bruiser. He wanted a knockout in the first round, and wanted it in the worst kind of way. So he went after Red about the way Battling Nelson would ‘eat up’ a green Swede just out of a lumber camp. He

rushed the red-feathered bird all over the pit. In the vernacular of the ringside, there was 'nothing to it.'

"The crowd went wild. Odds flew up on Sandy.

"And in the meantime, Red was groggy. Oh, yes, fighting cocks can be groggy, and they show it just the way a two-fisted fighter does. He wobbled around. His wings flapped dismally. There was no life left in his jumps, and no determination in his few feeble attempts to land his spurs as he sprang in the air despairingly.

"Of course, the fine points of the art were lost to the American spectators, uneducated in the *finesse* of the game. But even to an American it was evident that Red was 'all in.' Then all of a sudden he lost his nerve, lost it utterly, and turned tail. As he could n't get out of the pit, he circled round and round it, and close after him came Sandy, greedy for victory.

"And here was where Red showed that there was a good supply of superfine grey matter in his little head. He kept the inner track. Every time he went around he traversed about two thirds of the distance the other bird did, for the pursuing Sandy was always kept outside of Red,

the latter shortening his circle when the dun-coloured bird tried to rush in.

"So it went for full fifteen minutes, simply a merry-go-round, with the spectators hooting the coward bird. Then something happened. If you had seen it, it might have reconciled you to cock-fighting. For all at once it was evident what was going on down there in the pit. Sandy was tiring out; Red had led him into a long, stern chase and provoked him into wasting his energy on exhausting and fruitless attacks. While Red had loafed along for perhaps a mile Sandy had been fooled into running at top speed nearly twice that distance. And Red was fresh and Sandy was dead tired.

"The people saw it, and yelled approval. Red realised it, too, and changed his tactics. All at once he stopped running and turned on the pursuing and exhausted Sandy. There was one fierce flare of feathers, one scratching mass of rooster, and Red, the almost-vanquished, was victor."

CHAPTER XVII

Ruins and a Painting



GUATEMALA CITY lies some seventy-five miles from the Pacific and twice that distance from the Atlantic Ocean. The Guatemala Central is the western railroad, built by Collis P. Huntington. On the east, connecting the capital with Puerto Barrios, on the Gulf of Honduras, is the Guatemala Northern, the two roads forming the northernmost of the three transcontinental routes that span Central America, across each one of which our casual travels took us. Both railroads possess, through grants and otherwise, enormously valuable landholdings in various districts of the country, beside being fortified with other concessionary properties and rights.

Before sunrise one day we left the Gran Hotel and made our way to the Guatemala Northern depot, and there boarded a train for an all-day journey to Quirigua, some sixty miles from the

Atlantic coast, where are hidden away the relics of a gigantic ruined city whose story antedates by centuries the known history of our western world.

The country differed greatly from that traversed in ascending the slope from the Pacific. The scenic side of the journey resolves itself into three phases, the first of which, in the highland regions of the capital, is a changing picture of abysmal gorges, rugged hills, and picturesque countryside, all wildly abrupt and fascinating. The second phase of the journey carries one into the *tierra caliente*, and for many dusty, hot, and weary miles the train drags through a region that bears the earmarks (in January) of perpetual rainlessness, and where cacti and yuccas are the only vegetation that seem to thrive, and a listless shrunk river wanders seaward, affording its parched valley little refreshment other than the convenience of washing soiled clothes upon the rounded, sun-baked rocks of its shores. The lower strata brings one again to the coastal plains, where the Tropics hold undisputed sway, with sweltering heat and rain and fabulous productiveness.

At Zacapa we nooned and ate a luncheon in the

depot dining-room. Zacapa is a bustling place at train time, for here the up and the down trains pass each other, and there is a fearful dusty rush for the provender, while small boys stand guard over one's hand-baggage and seats in the coaches for a nominal consideration.

I remember that luncheon well, chiefly for a trivial incident. A hog shared the table with us and half a dozen other travellers. A human hog, that is, one of the species that wallows here and there about the globe and should have a ring in its snout. Ours was a crowded, fairly dirty, and comestibly depleted table. The only appetising thing in sight was a bowl of lettuce, which looked cool and crisp. Perhaps it was. We never had an opportunity to find out, for a massive German plumped himself down at the end of the table, annexed the salad, poured oil and vinegar upon the whole concoction, and then hurried it into his own cavernous interior. No one spoke, but I know that a silent prayer went up from every sufferer; if ever the Lord was called upon to smite a man it was then! May he be cursed with everlasting indigestion!

Late in the afternoon we reached Quirigua and

forthwith were taken in tow by the superintendent of the United Fruit Company's banana plantation, which has turned the long unused jungle swamps into a "paying proposition" and now encroaches upon the very outskirts of the ruined city. Seventy-five acres have been reserved for the Mayan relics.

"And it's some of the very best banana land, too," lamented the superintendent.

He was paid to make bananas grow. That was his business—to have them thrive and make money for the U. F. So it was irksome to see a patch of promising swamp produce nothing more than a crop of ruins that date back nearly to the time of Christ. He was of the Yankee school whose disciples would plough up the Forum Romanum for a wheat field or use the relics of Pompeii for railroad ballast.

We dined and slept at the superintendent's quarters, where we were kindly received as guests, and early the following morning sallied forth in a motor car that was the twin brother to the one travelled in a month or two before along the tracks of the Zent banana walks in Costa Rica. A short spin and we stopped beside a bedraggled Carib hut.

A muddy path opened up behind it, speedily vanishing in the neighbouring jungle. A couple of languid darkies lifted the car from the track.

"Here 's the road to yesterday," laughed our guide, and we plunged after him through the slough.

Although it was not yet sun-up, the air was oppressively hot—so hot that we soon were perspiring uncomfortably. A mist hung close to the thickets. The grass was water-soaked and every tree branch disturbed spattered down upon us a miniature shower-bath; and there were branches a-plenty, for even such a much-used trail as this is overgrown quickly in a land where the vegetation refuses to be suppressed and vines and trees and grasses will blot out an entire field almost in a few weeks if left unmolested. As we advanced toward the heart of that dense, dark, dank jungle, so oozy treacherous underfoot, and so amazingly alive in its baffling upper growth, it seemed small wonder that an entire city had been swallowed in its midst and remained hidden there for centuries. Forgotten and unknown indeed, until 1840, when a Mr. Catherwood, an artist, stumbled upon some of the lesser ruins.

Then all at once there was a little clearing, and in its midst a massive stone monument—an enduring souvenir of a bygone race, intricately carved with the glyph symbols whose key was lost when its long-dead writers abandoned their hold upon the country and were destroyed or driven no one knows whither by some equally unknown force.

In the midst of that jungle we faced America's Yesterday.

“World wrongly called the New! This clime was old
When first the Spaniards came, in search of gold.
Cities rose, ruled, dwindled to decay,
Empires were formed, then darkly swept away.”

We stood where the first kings of the southland stood, and where they ruled and worshipped and were mighty in a civilisation whose relics show it more than worthy of comparison with the civilisation that to-day has inherited its old imperial domains. Historians have established the fact that these ruins were a living, sentient city not later than eight centuries ago; that Quirigua was in its prime about 500–650 A. D. is a supposition scientifically based. They are Mayan ruins.

Anything much more definite than that bare sentence is not yet forthcoming. Only the physical facts of the dead city remain—the scattered monuments, the pyramid, the occasional paving and bits of wall, half buried in the dark earth and mud that wholly covered all else countless years ago. Soon some secrets may be wrested from the jungle-smothered, mud-covered historical treasure chest; for already archæological expeditions from the United States have tinkered with its locks, and thorough excavations are arranged for.

The first object to catch our eager attention was one of thirteen monoliths, or monuments, that are scattered among the ruins. These stelæ are elaborately carved, with figures, ornately decorated and garbed, and with complicated hieroglyphics adorning the sides, which doubtless would tell a wonderful story could they but be translated. One stela stands twenty feet above the ground and leans more than twelve feet out of the perpendicular, so that to keep it in position there must be at least ten feet of the column under ground. In addition to the more striking erect monuments are a number of squat stones, even

more grotesquely carved, one of which portrays what might be a tiger's or a turtle's head (thirteen hundred years ago the resemblance may have been greater than it is to-day), while a round stone near the centre of the ruins, whose top and sides are covered with glyphs and symbols, with an elaborately dressed woman as the central figure, is considered by scientists perhaps the most interesting example of stone carving yet discovered in the western hemisphere.

Across the northern end of the ruins lies the remains of a wall, now little more than a mound. Near the centre is a pyramid with a base covering a rough square some 150 feet in dimension and originally in excess of forty feet high. We found this pyramid a tangled mass of greenery, and could clamber up only with difficulty where others had made some pretence of a trail. Many of its blocks are of marble, and such examples of the masonry work as remain intact show a high degree of mechanical skill on the part of the builders. Roughly speaking, this pyramid seems to occupy the centre of what was once a great open court, the latter flagged with blocks of stone and probably partially hemmed in by walls, and, perhaps, roofed

buildings. From what we saw of the pyramid there seemed good reason to believe that it is not a solid mass of stones, but has chambers and passageways hidden within it. No doubt their final excavation will bring to light matters of surpassing interest. The stelæ are scattered around the pyramid, the greater number of them to its north, between it and the most distinctly remaining wall.

The ruins lie in the lowland valley of the Motagua River about half a mile from the stream's present course, and doubtless it is the residue left from the overflow of this river that has gradually filled in above them, until the one-time ground level of the ancient city is covered to a depth ranging, perhaps, from three to ten feet.

Nearby there are still well-defined traces of a canal. Several theories are advanced concerning it. One, plausible enough, is that it afforded water connection with the river. Another is that the bit of canal remaining to-day is but a fraction of a comprehensive system that formerly existed, whose chief purpose was to give means of transportation for the enormous amount of stone used in constructing the city. Whither they may have led and whence came the stone are unsolved



A relic of Mayan art, Quirigua



A view of the rain-washed Guatemalan countryside

mysteries that one is at liberty to add to the host of riddles conjured up by this puzzle-city of long ago.

There are unanswerable historic puzzles, unsolved racial questions, and baffling ethnological enigmas clinging to the lost story of Quirigua, the scientists will tell you. But for a layman this riddle alone is enough: How and whence came the tremendous blocks of stone?

Some of those monuments weigh at least ten tons each, and all are of a soft, coarse sandstone. As far as can be ascertained, no such stone is found anywhere near Quirigua. It seems incredible that the ancient people quarried these huge blocks many miles away and then carried them, Heaven knows how, to their city. Even to-day, with all our mechanical contrivances, it is said that it would be next to impossible to transport those great monoliths away from Quirigua, through the swamps and slime, even should the Guatemalan government permit the scientists to annex one. How, then, did the Mayans contrive a similar task so many years ago?

Next to nothing is known of the history of the Mayas. They, or the Toltecs, are supposed to

have preceded the Aztecs as the dominant race of southern North America. The latter were at the height of their power and phenomenal civilisation when Alvarado and the Spanish hordes swept into Mexico and Central America early in the sixteenth century. The Toltecs are credited with the construction of the city of Tula, in the Valley of Mexico, about the seventh century. That they may have been driven from that territory by the Aztecs and thence wandered into Guatemala is a plausible theory. But the puzzles of all this are for anthropologists; the wonders of the ancient civilisation remain for the unscientific observer of to-day, to dumbfound him with the realisation that long before Montezuma's empire was a reality and centuries before Europe even dreamed of a western continent, there flourished here in southern Mexico and Guatemala a marvellous civilization whose little-known relics to-day offer as substantial and fascinating a field of pleasurable research as any on our hemisphere. And Quirigua is only one among several ruined cities, the other important ones being Palenque and Uxmal in Yucatan, Utatlan in Guatemala, and Copan in Honduras.

All about the Quirigua ruins themselves, traces of a prehistoric community are encountered. Every now and then labourers digging drains for the adjacent banana walks will unearth masses of pottery, most of which is extremely fragmentary. I now have a small human face, evidently a part of a vase or ornament, which was dug up by a Jamaican in a trench a few hundred paces from the offices. The features are of a supercilious cast and the nose is gigantic—a very Roman Roman nose it is—and that feature—the large, familiarly curved nose—is found on every face. Which led one of the young fellows employed by the United Fruit Company to remark that this clue removed every vestige of doubt concerning the identity of the Mayas.

“Why, there’s no mystery at all,” he said. “Of course they sprang from the lost children of Israel.”

Whatever the ancestry of the Mayas and the Toltecs, the group of young men at the superintendent’s house assuredly had a diversified ancestry of their own, and, no doubt, a checkered history. One was a Britisher—conversationally the most supremely British Britisher with whom I

ever mixed metaphors or "'arf and 'arfs." When he spoke an overflow of discarded "h's" accumulated beside him, while in free-for-all, catch-as-catch-can talking it was as hard to follow him as a Jamaican—and any one who has tried to understand the ungodly linguistic hybrid offered by a Jamaican knows our suffering tongue at its worst.

I have spoken of the way banana men regarded the Quirigua ruins—as a nuisance occupying useful ground. It also happened that this particular group had small patience for art; their disrespect and its special target introduced us to a quaint adventure. Its *dramatis personæ* were an "Old Master" and a tropical tramp.

The first time we saw the former it impressed us little more than it did the banana-men, but that may be excused on the ground that a century-old coating of grime disguised its true beauty. The tropical tramp was the owner of the painting, which he still is, and is as well a valued and delightful friend. His name is Edward Kildare, and it is only because he himself admits its fitness that I venture to style him (what he was) a "tropical tramp."

In the dining-room of the banana superin-

tendent's house, which was pretty much a company mess, there hung a dingy painting, which looked old enough to be valuable and certainly was so antique as to be nearly undecipherable. A gibe or two passed across the supper table, directed at Kildare by his fellows, for evidently his pride in the painting kept him a constant target for ridicule.

"Say, Kildare, why not make a beer sign out of it?" was one suggestion.

Another chaffer, I recall, reminded the amateur collector that "a real Old Master should be put in a safe, as they 're worth thousands."

The next day Kildare was a fellow-traveller on the train returning to Guatemala City. It appeared that some friction with the powers that be had arisen, so he bundled up his dunnage bag and bade Quirigua good-bye. He left a time check that would be due in a month, and the painting, both to be forwarded later, and struck out on a two-hour whim. He was, in a way, typical enough of the genus *Homo* that goes by the name of "tropical tramp" in the southland, although not quite typical either, because he lacked too many of their vices. But Kildare was a "sho'-enough"

tramp, and one for the pure love of it, for he had, he confessed, a bad case of the *wanderlust*. His first tropical experiences had been at Panama, where he served three years in the Canal army, and thence graduated northward through Central America, holding first one job and then another, and always contriving to get a vast deal of enjoyment from his journeyings. Just then he was in that financial status that lies intimately next to that one called "broke" and which can merge so rapidly into the latter if given half a chance. Kildare had forty dollars. And even at that he never tried to borrow, which is another reason that he is n't a full-fledged tropical tramp; any one who has suffered will explain.

At Zacapa we saw the last of Kildare, for there he left the train, planning to take up a horseback journey of some hundreds of miles over unknown mountain trails in Honduras, his objective point being the American mines of San Juancita, inland from Amapala, where the Connecticut girls lived to whom we had bidden a Christmas-time good-bye down the coast. So we gave the hairbrained traveller a note to our friends, and he in turn entrusted us with a message to home folks near

San Francisco. Then he was off, with a few pounds of baggage in his roll, forty dollars and a copy of the *Golden Treasury* in his jeans, and a happy determination to see all there was to see.

"There's no telling," he laughed as he left us, "I might run on to something big. It'll be interesting anyhow." And away he started for Honduras, to get there God knows how!

One evening a week later we found in our rooms at the Gran Hotel in Guatemala City a glorious lot of cut flowers—several baskets crowded with every kind of bloom and blossom. The mystery of whence they came was explained by a card

"From The T. T."

And then while we were pondering how our friend of Quirigua could contrive to send flowers from Honduras, all at once there was a knock at the door and who should appear but Kildare himself!

He had essayed the trails from Zacapa, but after a brief experience their hopeless condition, resulting from tropical downpours and flooded mountain torrents, had compelled him to abandon the attempt and turn back. So he came to the capital and found us. In the meantime plans had

been changed again, and Honduras with its mines and possible art treasures was no longer the desideratum, but instead he would give up the Tropics for a time and go with us to San Francisco, which was welcome news, as a more welcome travel companion could not have been contrived.

So the Picture was sent for, and arrived from Quirigua a few days before we went down to San José and the steamer we supposed would be waiting for us there.

Kildare waxed more and more enthusiastic about that painting as we came to know him better, and so did we, when we saw it at close range. It was a wonderful piece of work, and we had a wonderful time with it—indeed, who could ask for a more unique fellow-traveller than a picture painted on copper by an “old master” in the seventeenth century, picked up by chance in a Central American city and finally brought into its heritage of recognition by a tropical tramp? It all sounds like a fairy story, does n’t it? But instead of being fiction it proved itself most delightful fact, and the outcome of the adventure was that Kildare’s treasure has brought him offers of \$20,000, which have been refused as being too low. The

find cost him \$42.50, and—best of all, as he sees it—the banana men thought his judgment crazy!

It must be admitted that we too were doubters at the outset, for it is hard to stumble upon a chance painting far away from the beaten tracks, a painting that has been picked up by a soldier of fortune for a song, and all at once be convinced that it is what its owner thinks it—a priceless treasure from the brush of a great Flemish School artist, painted three hundred years ago and lost to fame for a century or two by some freakish whim of fate. No, it was hard to believe. And yet we recognised the beauty of the work, while we scarce dared credit its value.

Briefly, the painting is by Peter Ykens, a master of the Flemish School, who died in 1695. (While the quaint signature of Ykens was there for us to see at the outset, of course, it was not until months after our return to the United States that its genuineness was reliably established and judgment of connoisseurs passed upon the work as a whole.) It apparently represents the birth-scene of Ykens's son, Jan Peeter, and depicts a family grouped about the bed of the mother with the babe and its nurses the central figures, all magnifi-

cently drawn and standing out from the sombre tones of the background as sunlight contrasts with shadow. The colouring is radiant and deep, reminiscent—if it be not sacrilege to say it—of Rembrandt's royal hand.

The picture, which is about thirty-five by forty-six inches, is upon hand-beaten copper, to which fact it doubtless owes its existence and certainly its excellent state of preservation.

However, that copper added to the difficulties of getting it away from Guatemala, for it will be remembered that one of the principal duties of the customs authorities is to guard against the exportation of metals. As there are further rules prohibiting the removal of objects of historic interest from the country, it will be seen that we had a pretty task with our queer treasure. It finally was smuggled through as an original work of my own, securely boxed and never allowed out of my hands for fear that the abnormal weight of the copper "canvas" would wreck the whole enterprise. As I had been seen sketching (I had made it a point to be seen, though posterity will never see the sketches!) there was no serious difficulty. And what might have happened should they have

insisted upon an examination of my "sketch"! There can be no doubt that Ykens, if his spirit be at all sensitive, turned in his grave as I, a Yankee impostor, went forth from one of the old-time Spanish colonies palming off as my modern own this long-buried child of his genius.

When discovered in a Guatemala City junkshop the picture was inclosed in a frame of solid wrought silver some ten inches wide, and the dealer agreed to let it go for the weight-value of the silver, about four hundred dollars, throwing the picture into the bargain. But beautiful and valuable as was the frame, Kildare had no such sum, and finally made a dicker with the owner by which he secured the painting for \$42.50. And at that each believed the other shockingly cheated!

The history of the Old Master is a closed chapter. When and how it left Spain may, perhaps, be established, but its wanderings and changes of fortune in Central America can never be unearthed. Could it speak for itself no doubt a strange tale would be told of the golden days of the Spanish *conquistadores* and grandees, and of the tragic century that followed their downfall.

Through the long days of the voyage northward

up the West Coast we pieced together possible and impossible romances for our copper treasure, in the meantime gently removing the grime of ages from its face by ceaseless rubbing with—the most unromantic beauty restorer imaginable—Irish potatoes!

CHAPTER XVIII

Antigua



THE road to Antigua is a sheer delight. It has been my good fortune at one time and another to glimpse the famed highways that surround Italy's gorgeous Bay of Naples, to tramp through the most lovely districts of rural England, to view much of beautiful Sweden and majestic Norway on the intimate footing of a highroad vagabond, and to wander largely throughout our own North America, seeing somewhat of hardy Canada and New England, of the gentle South, the brilliant South-West, the broad middle West, and, above all, the rare scenic playgrounds of the gloriously big Pacific Slope territory. But for pure out-of-door traveller's satisfaction give me the road to Antigua, the trail we followed later toward Acatenango, and a score of other routes that wander hither and yon through this Guatemalan land of winter-time

delight. For the highlands of Guatemala have the grandeur of the mountains, a rugged ever-shifting picturesqueness, the blessing of gay flowers and shrubs and endless trees, quaint ruins of to-day and yesterday, and a native life that is replete with vivid colouring and unique interest. And then there is the climate, which, during the first three months of the year, is nothing short of perfection.

One morning we left Guatemala City bound for Antigua in a *dilijencia*, drawn by a "spike" team of five mules. As far as the vehicle was concerned, we might have been jolting over the sage-brush plains of our own far West; the combination of chuck-holes and dilapidated waggon-springs was peculiarly reminiscent of pioneer days on Oregon's Shaniko flats, when people too impatient to wait for railroads went to Bend by stagecoach over one hundred miles of road whose condition could not be accurately described when ladies were present.

The first stage of the journey took us through picturesque villages and cultivated areas. Here and there was a shrine at the wayside. Sometimes the road was separated from the fields and *cafetals* by 'dobe fences, crumbled or gaily tinted with



Antigua is a spectre of former magnificence



Quarters of banana men at Quirigua

newly applied calcimine as the case might be, while elsewhere its only boundary was straggling cactus. Although the road itself was dusty, the fields were green and the wayside carpeted with flowers.

The greatest interest was the continuous stream of humanity which poured along the highway, cityward, for when we started it was early morning and the *cargadors*, the women, and the ox-carts were coming in to the market as flies come to sugar. They all carried some burden. Even the tiniest youngsters had for a back-pack a bundle of faggots, for wood is scarce and the family must have fuel for cooking the noonday meal in the shade of some wall or tree.

The chief burden of the *cargadors*, the professional carriers with racks on their backs, is pottery. One of the striking things about their work—and it typifies the aboriginal crudity of the general development—is that these carriers cross each other's paths with what is practically the same manufactured product. For instance, one *cargador* takes a *flat* earthenware bowl for 150 miles to a district where the only kind made is a *round* vase affair, so creating what railroad men call a

cross-haul. Both articles are made from identically the same clay, but each district knows how to mould only one pattern. Every village has made its particular kind perhaps for centuries; the art has been handed down from generation to generation and if the idea of incorporating other models into the local manufacture ever has occurred to any Indian it is more than probable that he was cast forth as a rank heretic. So to-day the brown *cargadors* are everywhere with their different loads, which they carry often for more than a hundred miles at a daily wage of a few cents.

All of them run or dog-trot; for there is no walking. The distances covered are marvellous, as is the contempt they feel for miles. For instance, I learned of men who *run nine miles every day* to their labour, and back again at night, and think nothing at all of it. Once I forgot a roll of films, and an hour after we had left on horseback my host, discovering our loss, sent it after us by a *mozo*; eleven miles from the *finca* the runner caught us and seemed delighted when I gave him a couple of *pesos*—ten cents!

None of the human burden-bearers of the road use their hands to carry even the lightest article,

for with the exception of what is packed on the back, everything is placed upon the head and balanced there. Some of the results, at least from the standpoint of a northern traveller, are amusing. There is the old story of the Indian who was entrusted with the delivery of a letter, and instead of carrying it in his hand went down the street with a brick on his head, the letter anchored underneath the brick. I have seen a girl stand on the curb and hold a horse for an hour while its master was dining, and all the time she kept on her head a basket of fruit which must have weighed thirty pounds or more; it was easier to leave it there than to set it down! Once we watched masons building a wall; the tender, who carried the mortar for the other who was upon the platform some five feet above the ground, stood beneath with the forty-pound bucket of mortar upon his head while the top man extracted what he wanted with his trowel; the process lasted ten minutes for each bucketful, but apparently the tender figured that there was less exertion in letting the bucket stay where it was than it would be to set it on the scaffolding.

In a previous chapter I have spoken of the

women of the road and of their splendid physical strength and sturdy litheness. With them the law of the survival of the fittest works out unsparingly. The laggards and the unfit die by the roadside; at least, they are seldom if ever in evidence, for in our considerable Guatemalan journeying I do not recall seeing a single sick woman excepting such as may have been beggars in the cities or dwelt there in homes.

Considerable inquiry from reliable sources established that among the Indians there is little or no observance of marriage responsibilities, one prime reason for which is that the women (I am speaking of the Indians, who comprise perhaps eighty per cent. of Guatemala's population) are physically about as competent as the men, and are practically all self-supporting. However, while there are few conventional marriages there is an abundance of children, and even on the road one sees troops of youngsters trailing after their mothers, while the number of women who evidently are about to become mothers is prodigious; it seems conservative to say that more than half the women of the road bear evidence of this kind. The law of the "survival of the fittest" operates with special

rigour here, for the mothers give birth to their children at the very roadside, and within twenty-four hours thereafter are again jogging along on their journeys, with their offspring slung on their backs and, quite probably, a goodly burden balanced upon their heads. I was told of authentic instances (and there are thousands unrecorded) where Indian women dog-trotted with heavy burdens up to the very time of birth, and then were on the road again within a few hours. Of course only the sturdy babies survive, and only the sturdy mothers.

Morality is not a drug on the market. In fact, so far as the great majority of the population is concerned, it is non-existent. A priest or devout churchman will lay the blame upon the fact that officials make a charge for performing the civil marriage ceremony, and as it is necessary to have this as well as a church service for a marriage to be legal, the poor people find it cheaper to get along without any ceremony, which they proceed to do, probably with extremely vicious results so far as the future of the race is concerned.

One of the curious things about Guatemalan weddings is that for the civil ceremony the bride

wears black. As soon as this is over she changes her garb to white and so clad is united by the bonds of the Catholic Church. No doubt the priests encourage this marriage mode, for they apparently miss no convenient opportunities to make governmental procedure unpopular. Nor can they be blamed greatly, for assuredly the administration has gone far out of its way to heap indignities and difficulties upon the Church. For instance, it is not permissible for a foreign priest to enter Guatemala, and as there are no inducements for native-born boys to study for the priesthood, it seems but a matter of time before there will be no more in the land.

"During the last two years fourteen priests have died in Guatemala," a priest told me. He was an American, an educated and a devout man, and supremely beloved and powerful among his conglomerate flock. "And only one new one has entered the work. In thirty years Guatemala will have no priests."

"Will that mean the end of the Church also?" I asked.

"No. The Church will remain as long as the people have Latin blood in their veins. Even

without the priests to lead them they will gather in the churches and worship. Cabrera will never dare destroy the buildings."

Such is the opinion of a churchman.

But to return to the Antigua road. Shortly before noon we were well up toward the summit of the 7500-foot divide that separates the old capital from the new, and stopped at the delightful inn of San Rafael for luncheon. It is a spotless little tarrying place close beside the road, shaded by a row of towering eucalyptus trees and surrounded by a terraced garden crowded with roses and other flowers. Just below, on the hillside, was a patch of luscious strawberries which contributed a welcome addition to the *chocolate con leche* and the *pan dulce* of the repast.

Here *Señora* was not *Señora* at all but *Madame*.

"Espagnol? Moi? Mais non!" she shrilled decisively, explaining that she was "Parisienne," and proud of it.

The cooking, too, was of Paris, and characteristically delicious. And it may be added that the bill savoured of French thrift, for it hovered far above the customary modest Guatemalan figures. Also, Madame works a clever little ruse, which we

did not appreciate until experienced wayfarers later explained it. She went to our *cocher* and gave him a bottle of beer; she always does that, for it encourages drivers to bring trade to her hostelry. But then she turned around and charged us for the beer; we paid, and wondered why the driver never exhibited any gratitude for our "treat"!

Between San Rafael and Antigua that driver found it necessary to fortify himself with "white eye" upon several occasions, to such an extent, in fact, that by the time we neared our destination he was a very reckless driver indeed. Once there, and safely out of the rolling vehicle, I gave him a generous *pourboire*, more because we were glad to be done with him than for any other reason.

"God will repay you," said he, as soberly as an owl. I let him go without arguing the question.

Antigua is *triste*. It is a community of sadness, a spectre of former magnificence. Only the ruined shell remains of what was once the capital and the city-beautiful of Central America. Hemmed in by mountains, neglected by progress, it basks there in the near-tropical sunshine, inertly dreaming of its romantic yesterday, at once the dreariest and



The view of Antigua and the mountain Agua from the hotel window

the most fascinatingly beautiful dead metropolis imaginable.

Antigua was built in 1541. Previous to that there had been another city nearby, the original capital of Guatemala, which stood close to the base of what was then the mountain Hunapu. Without warning an earthquake came, the great crater of Hunapu was cleft in two, and down from it rushed the contents of the crater lake in a furious watery tornado which focused full upon the city, like some devilish battering-ram, and all but wiped it from the face of the earth. After that the mountain was called Agua, meaning the "Mountain of Water," and it and its sister volcanoes were received into the Church and, so to speak, were put upon their good behaviour. Nevertheless, in 1773, there followed another seismic cataclysm, and this time the new city which had been built to replace the water-destroyed one was shaken down. Fuego, the fire mountain, a neighbour of Agua's, was held responsible for this disaster, which was regarded as no less than a visitation of divine wrath. Three years later the modern Guatemala City was laid out some thirty miles from Antigua and well removed from the destruc-

tive district. But even the capital of to-day feels the hand of earthquakes now and then and all the strength of the hugely thick walls of its dwellings and churches is required to withstand their force.

The skeletons of nearly sixty churches bear witness to the former magnificence of Antigua. Their arches and domes, the beauty of their now-dilapidated façades, and the exquisite carving found here and there in the details that remain in huge interiors, hint something of the story of the city's brilliant past. Much of the material that built them was brought from Spain, and the expense of it and the tremendous amount of labour that went into the construction stands to-day as a striking reminder of the creative genius and persistence of the Spaniards.

La Merced is the greatest and the best preserved of the churches, and a portion of it is used to-day for services. It stands near the centre of the town, whose buildings are all of one story and nearly all of them little more than shacks contrived out of the ruined walls of former buildings. Not far away is the main plaza, with stores surrounding it, and on market days a dense swarm of women vendors camped on it, with ragged sun-shields



An Indian woman of Antigua shelling corn



"In the ruins of La Concepcion cows graze where *padres* were wont to ponder "

rigged up above them and everything that one might desire (or not desire) to eat spread out upon the ground before them, open to the inspection of all, including the scavenger dogs, unless the owner be watchful. The *mercado* of Antigua is a lively sight indeed. The Indians are more primitive, if anything, than are those nearer the capital, and their dress is far less brilliant in colour. For instance, all the men wear black upper garments, a fact which adds much to the subdued general appearance.

The most beautiful of the church ruins is that of La Concepcion, on the outskirts of the city, nestling close to the sloping hillsides. We came to know it well, because it is now the property of an American who has transformed a portion of the magnificent old edifice into a dwelling while the rest of the great pile of buildings is given over to a nursery for coffee trees, storehouses, a candle factory, and a general recreation place for the cows, horses, and hogs of the present-day owner. It is grotesque—almost sacrilegious—the sight of the once enchanting patios now thronged with livestock. The cloisters accommodate hay and hides, instead of monks and priests; pigs root about the

once sacred recesses of the monastery; cows chew their cud's reminiscently as they stand knee-deep in the battered fountain places about which scholarly *padres* were wont to ponder. The candle factory occupies the shadowed depths of what was once a chapel, and the smoke from its weird charcoal fires filters skyward through an earthquake-made rift in the dome. A priest, it is said, owns the factory, and it appears that to be a priest and a candle manufacturer all at once is a profitable combination—far from a “combination in restraint of trade”! For it seems reasonable to suppose that if one sells candles, one not unnaturally would encourage one's parishioners to use a prodigious lot of them in the important work of saving the souls of those who have gone before.

There are numerous quaint details about the ruins of La Recollection and the other churches. In many places one encounters examples of the original system of plumbing which was extremely intricate, the “pipes” being a sort of terra-cotta tubing built into the massive walls. The water came from springs and reservoirs on adjacent hills, led down in aqueducts. The owner recently happened upon an underground passage and in



"A candle factory occupies the shadowed depths of what was once a chapel."



One of the monuments among the ruins at Quirigua

exploring it discovered a veritable catacomb crowded with skulls and bones. There are many of these subterranean corridors beneath the city, this one having been traced for over a mile, leading to the central church of Merced. But most of them are destroyed or partially blocked.

I remarked to the owner of La Concepcion that he doubtless had found many small relics about his domestic ruins, such as coins, bits of pottery, and the like. He laughed.

"I had a chance to!"

I requested enlightenment.

"You see," he explained, "this business of 'discovering' relics is a real trade in Guatemala. At least the fine art of *making* them is, although the actual 'discovering' is left to some one like myself who is on the ground and can attend to that end handily. The other day one of the relic makers offered to go into partnership with me; he was to supply the antiques and I was to 'discover' and sell them. It was a money-making proposition, but I did n't relish it. It is extremely easy to make pottery, for instance, that looks just like the stuff we occasionally dig out of ruins, and it costs next to nothing, while a tourist, once he has

seen where it is supposed to have come from, will pay almost any price."

One result of this elucidating information was that we fought shy of Antigua antiques!

One of the most unique of the churches still in use is that of San Francisco. The saint is supposed to be buried there, and those who have ailments come to be cured. The process is simplicity itself. The devout kneel before an iron grating which shuts off the resting place of the buried saint, having first placed offerings in the shape of miniature waxen images upon the grating. There they pray, setting forth their supplication to be cured of their affliction, and after rapping once upon the grating, run away and hide. The rapping is repeated and the hiding, after which the supplicant for miraculous aid returns and raps for the third time, and then kneels and listens. If an answering knock comes from within, the prayer will be granted.

Antigua, and for that matter all of highland Guatemala, is a place of the public bath-tub—at least, of the wayside wash-tub. For the washing places are one of the most persistent features of the city and of the countryside. They are every-



At work in a coffee *patío*



Praying at the miracle-working shrine of San Francisco

where, stone or concrete tubs always actively in use by the washerwomen, whose one and only soap seems to be lemons. With so much washing in progress, and so few clothes worn, the wonder of it is that everything and everybody is not spotlessly clean—which they are n't! The washing places usually have a pool in the centre, with small compartments walled off around three sides, each with a sloping place like a washboard, at which the women stand and scoop in water from the general pool. As cows and horses refresh themselves from the latter, and babies as often as not are scrubbed both there and in the "tubs," it can be surmised that the process might not impress a Dutch housewife as altogether admirable.

An afternoon drive from Antigua took us to the baths of San Lorenzo, one of the many hot springs in the vicinity. There is a little pool shielded by an abbreviated wall only eight feet high. Behind the spring a steep hillside rises. A well-beaten trail up that hill above the bath puzzled me until I chanced to see our dusky driver sneaking up it, with an anticipatory grin upon his face. After that while the ladies were enjoying their swims, I sat without the wall, and grimly kept the *mozo*

from mounting to his accustomed hillside vantage point, whence the little pool was visible. He was a very disgusted *mozo* and intimated that I was interfering with a well-established prerogative.

"El Menchen" was our inn, and no word regarding Antigua would be complete without a passing description of that diminutive paradise.

In the first place, it was paradise for sixty-six cents a day and any one with a grain of business acumen must admit that paradise at such a figure is a notable bargain!

The inn is built about a patio whose only roof is the sky—a beautiful blue dome, as limpidly sunny in the early spring as the skies of southern Italy. The patio is the beginning and the end of all things in "El Menchen," excepting only the bedrooms, which surround it on two sides, windowless caves floored with tiles, walled with the massiveness of a dungeon and opening directly upon the colonnade of the courtyard by a single door. We, who loved the fresh air, left our solitary bedroom door open during the night—a curiosity in a land where ventilation is an unrelished luxury—and no matter how early I might arise there was sure to be a group of inquisitive natives camped in



A watering and washing place at a Guatemalan wayside

the patio after dawn, studying the phenomenon of a Gringo and his lady who not only would brave the night air but also seemed to care so little for privacy. Theirs was only a mild curiosity, not intentionally impertinent, and once understood was not specially embarrassing. In this connection it is interesting to recall that one often sees Spaniards, even of the upper classes, pressing a handkerchief close to their mouth and nose as they hurry through the streets at night, doing all they can to keep the fresh air from being inhaled. As intimated, they have no use at all for ventilation and seal themselves in hot, stuffy rooms in a manner that is as revolting as it appears unhealthy to an Anglo-Saxon. That tuberculosis is prevalent is a matter not to be wondered at.

The patio is tiled. One end of it contains a few uncomfortable chairs and much comfortable sunshine. The other end is devoted to a quaint jungle of flowers, trees, and shrubs. These are arranged in tiny flower beds laid out with concrete walls a few inches above the tiled floor. There is an elaborate lot of them, each of different size and shape; with their many curious forms they remind one of the cookies fashioned with various

cutters in the days when cook and cookies were the most important items of life. Winding between the beds is a labyrinth of tiny paths while overhead the bamboo trees and the others have twined themselves together into a woven mass. Hidden away in the heart of the miniature jungle is a hexagonal pool from which the *mozo* dips pails of water when he swashes the courtyard in the cool of the early morning.

Breadfruit, *aguacate* (alligator pears), bananas, coffee, cocoa, and oranges are among the edibles growing in this marvellous patio, and in addition there are flowers of a dozen species, with the flaming poinsettia playing the brilliant part of the queen of the garden.

The table was spread upon a balcony flanking the courtyard, with the *señora* herself serving. Whether or not the lady in question is the proprietress I don't know, but assuredly she is the moving spirit of the Menchen, and a capable one at that. She is Indian-Spanish and very massive; her black hair hangs down her back, and her feet are bare. However, the meals are all that could be desired in a sixty-six cent paradise, for one can revel in a saturnalia of alligator-pear salad, eat



Guatemala is the land of the public washtub



Children and clothes are washed indiscriminately

delicious undreamed-of fruits, and enjoy all the strange luxuries of an excellent native cuisine.

But when it came to liquid refreshment "El Menchen" did not shine. We had asked what wines the house had, and the presiding amazon replied that there were both red and white.

"Let us see them," we asked, and they were produced. The bottles were satisfactory and bore imposing labels.

"What vintage—what year?"

"Oh, *this* year, of course," was the reply. It implied all the reproach a grocer might feel if you asked him when his fresh eggs had been laid.

It developed that several concerns in Guatemala make a business of printing first-class labels which are pasted on extremely second-class wines. The beverages themselves are imported in casks, mostly poor stuff upon which low duties are paid, and then bottled and labelled to suit the taste of the purchaser. The method has the elements of simplicity, if nothing else, to recommend it.

Despite its poor wines and sham waters "El Menchen" is a delightful tarrying place, tucked

away from the stir of the world. The climate is idyllic, the scenic charm endless, and the human life of to-day as picturesque as are the ruins of the old city with its tragic past.

CHAPTER XIX

To the Top of Central America



THE loftiest of the mountains that hem in Antigua is Acatenango. Its sister peaks are Agua and Fuego, the dread water and fire mountains, both volcanic, like itself, and both with destructive histories.

Agua is comparatively close at hand and is easily reached and climbed on mule-back, if desired, over a pleasant and beautiful trail, the entire excursion being made comfortably in thirty-six hours. It is a delightful outing and well worth taking. However, many scale Agua; it is too easy and too ordinary an undertaking to hold special charm for one with any mountaineering experience and its resulting zest for the uncertainties of the unexplored.

So we set our hearts on Acatenango. Those with love of the high places of the earth will understand when I say that the more difficult the trip was

represented to us, the more we wished to take it. For in this respect even casual mountaineering is a sort of epitome of human frailty: a man and a mountain are like a child and a star—the more remote the prize, the more is it desired.

We were told that Acatenango was the highest peak in all Central America, a statement which is perhaps open to argument, at least by a few hundred feet, its rivals in altitude being Tajumulco and Tacana. But no records worthy of the name exist, and there is no reason to believe that Acatenango is not what the Antiguaites claim, the "Top of Central America." Its ultimate crater peak stands close to fourteen thousand feet, if not more, above the oceans, making it a rival of Whitney in California and Tacoma-Rainier in Washington, our northern contenders for the laurels of loftiness.

"Only half a dozen white men have climbed it," the Americans at Antigua told us, and when it became evident to them that my wife as well as myself contemplated the trip, they threw up their hands in holy horror.

Nevertheless, we started. Not only that, we finished—at the "Top of Central America." And

as usual in such cases, the "insurmountable difficulties" were found to have existed chiefly in the minds of our advisers, whose tastes ran below the ten-thousand-foot contour line. But they were very good to us, were those pessimists, and aided whole-heartedly in arranging for saddle animals and our entertainment at "La Solidar," the *finca* of a German-American planter which perches far up on the mountain's flanks at an altitude of 8500 feet, and is credited with being the highest *ranchero* in Guatemala.

Our steeds were bony horses of diminutive size, and as I wore riding breeches and my wife sat her horse astride, we were the centre of a very pointed attention from the time of our first appearance upon the streets of Antigua until the wooded mountain trail enveloped us some hours later.

It was a thirty-mile ride to "La Solidar," and it proved an even more delightful scenic experience than the pleasant journey from Guatemala City to Antigua, and this despite the angular architecture of my steed's backbone regions and the resulting effects upon my own, thanks to a blanketless saddle of ungenerous proportion. First we

ambled along broad and shaded avenues, bordered by *cafetals*, or coffee orchards. They are wonderfully natty and aristocratic, are the *cafetals*, with regular rows of the clean-limbed trees, and here and there, at stated intervals, a shade tree, as the coffee treelets must be petted and pampered like the royal children they are. For this sunshade service many trees are impressed, the varieties chiefly seen being known locally as *cuxin* and *gravaleo*, while bananas, with their broad leaves, and even oranges, are interspersed among the coffee plants. These coffee trees, when we saw them, were radiant with red berries, so that at a distance the scarlet clusters among the dark glossy leaves were strikingly reminiscent of our northern holly berries. Some told us that January was not the time to see the Antigua country at its best; that in April the first spring rains would have cleansed the dust from the leaves and made the roadside a bower of blossoms. Perhaps. But even in January it is glorious, and no gluttoned epicure of visual delights but would admit that the poinsettia alone—the scarlet-leaved flower is everywhere—is enough brilliance for any wayside.

After half a dozen miles of dusty voyaging came



“We ambled along broad and shaded avenues, bordered by *cafetels*. or coffee orchards”

Duenas, a sunny, shabby little town, on the edge of the plain, with the hills rising close behind it. There we left the travelled highroad, and made off mountainward up an incessantly winding byway which was in reality a trail, although its boast of being a road was evidenced by the tracks of ox-carts. Those cumbersome carts go everywhere, road or no road, as the oxen will drag them up mountainsides or through jungles, if you give them enough time, for "time is the essence" of an ox-cart, as with some legal contracts.

Three hamlets we passed at various altitudes, clinging to the hillsides or flattened out upon a sunny plateau, each with its cultivated fields lying about it, all checkerboarded with fences and some of them seemingly standing almost on edge upon the steep slopes. The hamlets were San Sebastian, Conception, and Calderas, and at the second named we came upon the final stages of a *fiesta*, whose remnants at least illustrated the persistence of the peon once he has started to enjoy himself.

The first outward and visible sign of the celebration was a cluster of very intoxicated gentry, most of whom were asleep beside the trail, and all of them too far gone to be anything but filthy

monuments to the damaging cumulative effects of "white eye." Farther on was a more active group, whom the strenuous night had left intact for another day of revelry. And how they made the most of their playtime! It was noon and the sun beat down fierily, yet there in a little bare space before the door of a thatched 'dobe house half a dozen Indians danced—danced with an *abandon* that positively made one weary simply watching, for any one will admit that mid-day on a sun-baked hillside is not the place for even a tropical "Texas Tommy." And they had been at it all of the previous night and most of the forenoon. The usually giddy *marimba* music itself sounded wilted. Many of the revellers were adorned with outlandish costumes of bright cloths, with tails appended and horns fastened to their heads, and some of them with masks, comic and tragic; it was a veritable child's conception of a fancy-dress revel, ridiculous enough, yet with a queer uncanny flavour.

We nooned in the shade of a balsam tree, and a few hours later came to the crest of the divide, the *cumbre*, probably close to ten thousand feet in altitude, after toiling up a surpassingly lovely

stretch of trail, some of it sunny and winding through broad natural fields picturesque with great weed-like shrubs whose purple sprays brushed our shoulders as we rode upon our horses. Other stretches were shaded by groves of trees draped with grey moss and a multitude of orchids. For the most part those uplands are free of timber, and excepting the presence of rather ragged corn-fields where slopes are at all inviting, are chiefly nothing more than a rugged lot of natural meadows serried by *barrancas* and *arroyas* where the rains have swept the soil away.

Beside the trail at the very summit was a wooden cross, partially protected by a tiny thatched roof and with a huge heap of faggots piled up before it, all but blocking the trail. The bones of some foully murdered traveller lie beneath the cross, a legend relates, and all those who use the trail now carry a stick or two gathered by the wayside up to the *cumbre*, leaving it there before the cross as an offering to the spirit of the trail, much as Christian added other burdens to his own and by so doing lessened its weight. When the *cargadors* of the trail have amassed a sufficiently large pile of sticks it is fired, once or twice a year,

and no doubt the spirit of the wayside cross is propitiated and the labour of burden-bearing up the steep slopes appreciably lessened.

On that outing we encountered other quaint souvenirs of the superstition that goes hand in hand with the religion of the land. For instance, one finds sacks of herbs tied about the necks of calves and colts, which is to ward off harm should women who are about to give birth to children look at them. When a hunter shoots at a coyote he first takes care to scratch the sign of the cross on the bullets, for otherwise the seven devils that inhabit the animal would be able to twist the gun barrel irreparably.

A few miles farther on we came to "La Solidad." Well named "The Solitary," the *finca*, in lonely isolation, perches far up on a westerly sloping hillside. Just above the rough farm buildings a cornfield merges into a mountain-side forest, whose lofty trees shut from view the peaks that lie above. A cluster of thatched native huts, the homes of the labourers, is separated from the white quarters by the roadway, and below the valley opens out in a magnificent view of fields and forests, serrated by cañons and *barrancas*



On the trail to La Solidar



An Indian woman of the road

cleft hither and yon, for the entire countryside is moulded in the wildest confusion. In the distance, the skyline is rugged with the outlines of a dozen mountains, most imposing of them Santa Maria, which hurled forth death and destruction ten years ago.

Beside its wonderful views "La Solidaridad" has many attractions, among which may be numbered strawberries and a ghost. The former grew profusely even at the high altitude, in a garden wilderness sprawling about the house, and had for a pleasant complement much milk and cream, rare luxuries in this land where one gets milk only in *café con leche* (coffee with milk). The ghost was the relic of a murder committed on the ranch some months previously, for all the Indians were quite sure that the dead man's spirit stayed at "La Solidaridad," cavorting about at night time and doing all the disagreeable things it could contrive. A few days before our coming, the roof had been blown off the barn by a miniature tornado, and despite the extra work the accident gave them, the *mozos* were jubilant because they said that the ghost had gone along with the windstorm; it appears that this is a customary method for Guate-

malan ghosts to bid their haunts adieu when setting forth for pastures new.

Another murder incident came to my attention in this section. An Indian had killed a fellow in a brawl. Nothing was done about it until the murderer was so indiscreet as to enter a hospital for needed attention to wounds received in the *mêlée*. Once there it occurred to the authorities that a murderer in jail was a more profitable commercial asset than one at large, so to jail went the *mozo*. The matter was noticed because some days after the arrest the mother of the jailed murderer came to an American, offering to sell her cow.

"How much do you want?"

"Four hundred *pesos*," she replied. That was a fair price.

"But why do you want to sell?" the American persisted, as on a previous occasion the woman had refused to sell at any figure.

"I need the money," was her laconic and unconsciously Yankee rejoinder. On being further pressed she explained that the four hundred *pesos* would buy the freedom of her son—which it did.

Murder at about twenty-two dollars a head is cheap, any one will admit. The wonder of it is that with such a standard, and the near certainty that money can avert punishment for almost any offence, there is so little crime. American residents say hold-ups are almost unknown and that few of them ever take the precaution of carrying firearms even when making remote trips.

Shortly after three o'clock the morning after our arrival, we began our long day of climbing, the first and easiest stage by the uncertain light of a lantern. Manuel and Joaquin were our *mozos*, and the mules were "Mariposa," the butterfly, "Mularanca," the lame mule, and "Mulita," the little mule. We left our bony steeds, "Coyote" and "Coralio," at the *finca*, for the butterfly, lame, and little mules were better adapted to the work at hand than even the sure-footed nags. The young German *finquero* accompanied us.

For several miles a rough trail led *upward*—it was as near perpendicular as a trail could be, and still stick in place!—and the mules scrambled along at a fearful angle, keeping their footing with characteristic (and blessed) mulishness. A dense forest made solid walls on either hand, and the

mozos with their machetes were kept busy cutting vines and fallen trees which impeded progress.

At an altitude of about ten thousand feet this vine-clogged forest gave way to an open area of scrubby pines, the ground beneath them being carpeted only with brown bunch grass and doubly slippery with pine needles reinforced by the fact that it was frozen. As it was too much even for the mules, we dismounted. However, we did not yet abandon the animals but utilised them as tow-boats, and a grand success they were in this capacity, even though their usefulness lasted for but a short mile. Mules as mountain climbing motive power have their humours, as a unique sight if in no other way. A *mozo* led the *finquero's* mule, while he very literally tailed after him, one hand twined in Mularanca's dorsal extremity, while with the other he dragged Mariposa. I tagged after Mariposa, and my wife brought up the rear of the comic procession hanging on to Mulita.

Having seen Mariposa's heels in action during a corral mêlée the previous evening at the *finca*, I had a hearty respect for their prowess and so instead of intimately clutching the tail of the roan vixen, and so perhaps aggravating those

heels, I contrived to fasten a halter rope to the saddle of my animal and dragged along on it, with a good three feet of leeway from the expected kick. But even at that what with retaining my hold on my motive power, keeping my feet scrambling upward, and persuading Mulita to follow me by means of her lead rein, I had something of a task. Now, Mulita, although small, was stubborn inversely to her bulk, and when she took it into her head to stop (which was invariably at the identical moment when Mariposa was making a spurt) I found myself giving a first-class imitation of a mediæval martyr on the rack. Picture it: one arm being yanked from its socket upward, while the other is pulled out by the dead weight of the sedate Mulita, who probably perches gravely upon a precarious ledge, placidly drinking in the scenic effects, at the precise moment when Mariposa becomes filled with an enthusiastic resolve to get to the top in about three bounds; and the victim stands upon a frozen and slippery mountain-side, with an endless roll as a penalty for a lost foothold, and the altitude making his breath come in gasps and causing his feet to weigh a ton each, more or less.

Perhaps a mile below the summit of *Tres Hermanas*, the "Three Sisters," which is a lesser peak of Acatenango, we left the mules with Joaquin, the *mozo*, and thence scrambled upward over the bare volcanic-rock strewn slopes of what is evidently a long-dead crater cone. There was no danger in the climb, and the difficulties were chiefly those that can be overcome by perseverance; it was a matter of plugging away at it, the reward of the widespread view opening broader and broader as we neared the summit. Before noon we were on top.

Tres Hermanas is a rounded peak almost bare of vegetation. It is, perhaps, some six hundred feet below Acatenango, from which it is separated by a deep rift, at whose bottom is an ugly looking crater, surrounded by masses of large rough rocks that seem to have been spumed forth in the utmost confusion at some not-far-distant time. The crater is really the result of an eruption, shot out from the side of Acatenango. There has been no lava flow for centuries, so far as amateur observation could judge, but on the craggy slopes above the crater-pit jets of steam were visible even across the steep-walled valley. With Acatenango



On the summit of Tres Hermanas, with Acatenango and its crater in the background

and the recently destructive volcanoes of Guatemala, there does not seem to have been at any modern date a flow of lava, the erupted materials being confined to ashes, dust, and rocks. When Santa Maria played havoc in 1902 the damage was done by earthquake and by the fall of ashes which buried neighbouring districts to a depth of many feet.

On *Tres Hermanas* we lunched, chiefly from a cake of chocolate—which, like all native chocolate, was strongly flavoured with cinnamon—and a pot of coffee. For thanks to the luxury of having the *mozo* Manuel along, a bottle of water and a tiny flask of coffee essence had been packed to the summit. Any good climber will tell you that coffee should be tabooed in the high places—which it should; nevertheless, those who have been there will admit that good Guatemalan coffee, hot from the fire, is a nectar fit for the gods when consumed at an altitude of some fourteen thousand feet on a chill January morning, with the pride of Central America's coffee-land spread out far below one to the four points of the compass.

It was a hard long climb up the flanks of Acate-nango's final cone, which we essayed after a brief

rest on *Tres Hermanas*, where we left my wife and the *mozo*. So far as any records exist, not even an Indian woman had been to the top of Three Sisters (though the sturdy runners of the road would find it no great task) and certainly no white woman ever attempted the ascent before. So we left a record of the climb there, adding a feminine laurel to those of the Sierra Club of California, in whose company the ascent of Whitney had been made a few years previously.

We skirted the cavernous cleft of the crater, which all but split Acatenango in twain on the side facing us, and made our way up that southern slope, now knee deep in soft volcanic cinders, and again encountering grave difficulties in securing any foothold at all where unsuspected fields of glassy rock were encountered just below the ashy covering. On the slopes overhanging the lateral crater, which were chaotic with crevasses and weird formations, we found beds of moss tucked away here and there where the steam kept them warm, these often disporting dainty little flowers, strange denizens of such chill heights.

The top of Acatenango is a great open crater. It lies more like a saucer than a cup, with a flat

floor and regular curved sides, perhaps a third of a mile intervening between one wall and the other. There are no rocks—nothing to break the grey monotony of the cinders. At one place, the highest point of the saucer's edge, we rested and drank in the splendours of sky and cloud and land and sea that lay around and below us.

Vagrant clouds, misty and chill and grey, sped down upon us from the north, for a few minutes obliterating every view and then hurtling away across the heavens, chased by the breeze and the sunshine, and trailing after them patches of shadow over the hills and valleys of the earth that seemed so far below. To the north were the serried peaks of Atitlan, Santa Maria, and the lesser volcanoes, with the little lake of Atitlan cuddling at the base of its namesake mountain; seemingly little, at least, from our distant viewpoint, although in reality some ten by thirty miles in extent. Nearer there rolled a great plain, yellow with a thousand wheat-fields and deep cut by *barrancas*. A dozen clusters of white dots indicated the villages scattered far and wide, with threads of white leading from one to another, the cart roads of the country, which took straight courses across the open lands

for a league or two and then wound interminably up and down and over and around the billowing hills that here and there invaded the plateau levels, or dodged completely out of sight into the shadowed depths of unseen waterways.

Westward, when the clouds permitted, we saw the Pacific, a band of gold or dazzling copper, varying in tone and brilliancy as the angle of the sun's rays shifted. In from the edge of the gilded ocean stretched the lowlands of the coastal plain, hot, flat, and misty, until they billowed upward into the lesser foothills. Countless tiny squares of vivid green or yellow indicated the presence of sugar-cane fields, ripening or cut as the case might be; at the great distance—perhaps fifty miles—a thousand-acre patch resembled the square of some miniature chessboard. South-westerly lay the peak of Fuego, close at hand in actual distance, but, although really a part of Acatenango, separated from our vantage point by a deep and forbidding cañon whose negotiation in itself seemed to promise a sturdy day's work. Fuego is a rugged rocky peak, with treacherous looking cliffs of disintegrating stone, and all in all appears as if it might offer a considerable problem for

climbers. It is claimed that some native gentlemen have made its ascent.

To the south and east there lay below us deep broad valleys, with Antigua and its outskirt hamlets seemingly close at hand, and the buildings of Guatemala City gleaming where the sunshine struck them, in a more distant valley, half a hundred miles away. Nearer, at the very base of Agua's symmetrical cone, were dimly visible the ruined remains of the first city, destroyed 372 years ago when the "Water Mountain's" crater was cleft in two and poured forth its deluge. As said before, Agua dominates nearly every Guatemalan view. But from Acatenango, for the first (and last) time, we actually were in a position to look down upon the beautiful mountain, so far as comparative physical altitudes were concerned, although from no place could the exquisite cone and its splendid setting be more appreciated. Agua rises with long, symmetrical lines straight into the blue sky, curving gracefully out and up from a pedestal of tawny brown fields. Its middle garment is the green forest, from whose tousled patches its mighty head emerges bare and clean-cut, often with a cap of clouds upon it, or at least

with a cloud mantle about its shoulders through which the dark crest rises, doubly impressive for the contrast of the snowy white band below.

Northward was Mexico; we could see its mountains. Eastward lay the Atlantic, and to the west the Pacific. Southward stretched Central America—south far beyond the power of our eyes to see, over the intervening mountains and beneath the misty clouds that stifled the southern horizon. That was Central America, the land of six republics, the theatre of the most romantic and the most despicable chapters of history enacted upon the western hemisphere. From the top of it all I looked down, and dreamed of following the puny isthmian strip all the way to Panama, where the Canal is cleaving the continents apart. And, dreaming, I knew that the territory below us had slipped backward for two centuries, knew that it possessed all the elements of travellers' charm and possibility for economic development; knew—or thought I did—that the key to it all, the key that will open this Pandora's box of pleasures and responsibilities for the United States, will be turned when the ships from the Pacific and the Atlantic meet in Culebra Cut.



At the top of Central America. The Author on the summit of Acatenango



Indians masked and costumed at a *fiesta*

"What then?" I asked the *finquero*.

"*Quien sabe?*" said he. He was thinking, I believe, of his dinner.

At all events, the answer was appropriate enough.

"Who knows?"

Letting it go at that, I scribbled a record of our visit to the "Top of Central America" upon an envelope and put it in an empty film tin beneath a cairn.

"If Manuel thinks you left that up here," laughed the *finquero*, "some day he'll make the climb to get it."

Which is undoubtedly true. The tin is worth, perhaps, five cents, and why should not a Guatemalan *mozo* labour a day for such a munificent reward?

CHAPTER XX

Yesterday, To-day, and To-morrow



SOME years ago, the United States looked southward across the Caribbean to Cuba, and saw there a sad state of affairs. With some bloodshed, much expense, and a vast deal of political pother, Uncle Sam extended a mailed fist to that unhappy island and evicted the Spaniard, bag and baggage. The result of our initial martial excursion across seas ended Spain's rule in Cuba. But there was no annexation; ours was purely a war of sentiment, and we played the rôle of helpers of the helpless—played it to a crowded international house, the performance receiving rather more applause than hisses. Incidentally, the reward of our efforts, after expelling the Spaniards and rescuing the Cubans from themselves a second time, is to see the island to-day in none too happy a condition, if the statements of some recent writers are to be credited.

Later, we made another experiment beyond our borders, again at the expense of Spain. This time it was not a matter of sentiment and of freeing the oppressed, but of snatching a territorial watermelon while the owner was confined to his bed. It happens that the watermelon turned out a lemon (at least, many Americans think so), but the fact that the Philippines have proved themselves a troublesome pest does not alter the case.

Cuba perhaps a failure and the Philippines a perpetual grief. That, briefly, is the substance of our attainments where we have essayed interventions or conquests abroad.

Perhaps that is a rather depressing prelude to a brief chapter concerning the problems and responsibilities of the Central American Southland. Nevertheless, the two experiences form the basic reason why our public regards with disfavour any sort of intervention on the part of the United States in foreign affairs. The antithesis of this national state of mind is the Monroe Doctrine. (For the text of the "doctrine," see Appendix B.) A complement to the Doctrine is the fact that some one of our Central American little brothers is almost always in need of a spanking. Which, in

effect, creates this contradiction: We don't want to interfere, and we probably never shall interfere unless as a last resort; but we have gone on record as being the exclusive policeman for Central America and we fully realise that there is need of one.

As this is being written, Mexico is in the throes of revolutionary turmoil. We may, or we may not, intervene. If we do, it will be to experience the usual fate of any one who interferes in a family fight, and we shall have all Mexico, united for once, about our ears.

Señor Manuel Calero was the Mexican Minister at Washington last year. It is interesting to note a statement he made to the Mexican Senate a couple of weeks before the bubble of peace burst in Mexico City in February.

"I lied to the American Government for ten months, telling it the Mexican revolution would be over in six weeks," said he. "The truth is that the department of finance has not painted the situation as it really is. We should speak the truth, though it destroy us. The truth is that the situation is desperate."

That was a frank exposition of Mexican affairs

from the inside, made just before the world became aware that the situation was truly desperate in the land that a few years ago ousted Diaz.

Is the situation desperate south of Mexico? No. Yet it is such that it merits national attention, not so much because of any immediately impending difficulty as that it is essential for the United States once and for all to establish a plan of action as regards Central America, which, once established, must be carried out.

The republics of Central America have progressed indifferently well since 1821. Before that date, the history of each was too largely merged in that of its neighbours and with Spain's to be worth considering here. From the travail of the third and fourth decades of the last century, the six republics emerged much as they are to-day, so far as geographic situation is concerned. But of them all only Costa Rica and Salvador have had any measure of stability or prosperity, and even these two, until a generation ago, have had troubles enough and to spare.

To-day, Panama is orderly. There can be nothing more serious than election-time riots there, thanks to the fact that the policing of the Isthmus

is practically in American hands and the certainty that any disturbance threatening the peaceful operation of the Canal would be the signal for determined interference. Panama owes its national existence to the United States, and also its comparative affluence, and it is further placed under the protecting wing of the Yankee eagle by our promise to maintain its political independence. The Panamanians have no great love for us, but under the circumstances they are far too wise ever to show this, at least officially.

Costa Rica is stable, happy, and prosperous. Its government is not perfection—few are—but it is at least an actual republic. It is a proud little land, capable of caring for itself, if needs be, but in no wise bellicose, and never likely to originate international disturbance.

Salvador is another republic worthy of the name. Yet even tiny Salvador is not free from internal anarchy and external dangers, as is evidenced by the murder of President Araujo in February, a tragedy that occurred since the chapters of this book concerning Salvador went to press. Dr. Araujo was a good president, apparently notable for his honesty and public interest. His assassin,

the meagre news reports state, confessed that his act was the outgrowth of a plot hatched in Guatemala City, whether with or without official backing is not implied. At all events, the assassination was followed by a hasty mobilisation of Salvadorian forces along the Guatemalan boundary, as a precautionary measure, for Salvador heartily hates and fears its northern neighbour.

Of Nicaragua one can speak with little optimism. The unhappy land has been the scene of disturbances without number; it is bankrupt, its men and its means are depleted. The prospect for betterment is remote. The most that poor Nicaragua still has is a splendid array of natural resources—resources pitifully useless in a land whose people have retrograded beyond possessing power to utilise them.

Honduras is as bad. Inhabited by half a million Indians and half-breeds, it makes no pretence of taking seriously its \$125,000,000 debt, the heritage left to it by a half-century of governmental blood-sucking. Population and production are waning. Like Nicaragua, it is a sad sight.

Last summer there was bloodshed in Nicaragua, and while no immediate reason is apparent just

now, seeing the future through the experiences of the past, one must believe that new revolutions are sure to occur. The pitiful part of it is that there seems to be no cure for it all—no medicine other than the application of a very big stick, and even that remedy is temporary unless some sort of permanent policeman's work is undertaken; and Heaven knows what a pest we should inherit if through any diplomatic contortions we found ourselves the guardian, in reality as well as in name, of Honduras and Nicaragua!

Nearest to us is Guatemala. In a preceding chapter some attention was devoted to a passing description of affairs as they actually are in this giant among the pygmies. Guatemala is a land held in the iron hand of a dictator, Manuel Estrada Cabrera, the best that can be said of whose administration is that it at least assures stability—as long as it lasts. There is considerable commercial and agricultural development in Guatemala; the country is by all odds the most favoured by nature in varied riches and pleasant climate; and there is a great pretence of progressiveness made by the administration. The army is powerful. It is no secret that Cabrera desires to extend his dominions

over all Central America, nor is there any doubt that the scheme can never be fulfilled, either peaceably or by war. One who has travelled even casually through the republics, and talked with men of many sorts, soon sees that a united nation under Guatemala's whip hand, or, for that matter, under any rule, is a chimeric dream. They loathe the idea as thoroughly as they dread the possibility that the ultimate intention of the United States is to annex all of them—and against that they rave!

Three months before Diaz of Mexico fell, few could have foreseen that catastrophe; Mexico respected Diaz, and Diaz was far more firmly intrenched than seems to be the case with Guatemala and Cabrera. Some day, somehow, Cabrera will go. And then there will be chaos, and the United States, the self-appointed guardian of Central America, will face an unlovely situation. It is simply a matter of time. Undoubtedly to-day Cabrera is the prime trouble-maker of the Southland. But we are patient, and shall continue so to be, until, perhaps, a time comes when the Guatemalan dictator unwisely steps upon the official toes of some European nation. Then, in all

probability, Cabrera will try to hide behind the coat-tails of Uncle Sam. And what will Uncle Sam do?

The entire Isthmus is strewn with appalling political wrecks, and in them, little by little, have perished the wealth and the happiness of the unfortunate lands. We have had a grave responsibility in those wrecks, however, for there can be no doubt that our *laissez-faire* policy has done much to permit their occurrence. The Monroe Doctrine saddled us with an unpleasant duty, and has proved for the republics a perpetual franchise for deviltry, because, for the most part, we have dodged that duty.

The Doctrine recently cropped up into a second childhood when the United States Senate, early in 1913, passed a resolution which, in effect, prohibits the settlement of any foreign power in a harbour or locality which would threaten the safety or communication of this country in time of war. The press of the Southland brand this as an "extension of the Monroe Doctrine," and choose to believe it a step toward our acquisition of the territory south of us, a move, say they, which must be, and will be, fought desperately. Could they

but realize that the very last thing the people of the United States desire to acquire is a handful of peppery tropical republics!

So to-day we are approaching the parting of the ways. If nothing more acute brings the situation to a head the Canal will cause a change, for its opening cannot but focus southward such a widespread popular interest that some better defined procedure than that of the past will become essential. The Monroe Doctrine, propounded a century ago, must be remodelled, or the letter of its implied responsibilities should be lived up to. In the latter case, a hornet's nest would be stirred up at home and a worse one in Central America. The former would probably mean that some power from across the Atlantic might take a hand at playing policeman. And a constructive policeman—even one with a foreign inflection—would prove a boon for Central America.

These are simply the random observations and conclusions of a casual North American traveller. There is nothing new in them, for the general sentiment of the preceding paragraphs has been given to the public before by several able writers, all, perhaps, better qualified to speak their opinions

than one who makes no pretence of having made a thorough study of Central American affairs and their relation to our own. But to close even a book of travel sketches without a word or two upon the broader political outlook of the territory traversed, especially when its immediate future bears so intimate a relation with our own national policies, and the events of the day focus such a vital attention upon it, would be to end lamely, indeed.

Ours was a journey for pleasure and interest—the unrivalled pleasure and interest of new sights in strange lands. It was rewarded by both, in full measure. Central America proved itself a rare *terra incognita* for a ramble off the beaten paths. To-day one grand good thing is its freedom from the guide-book tourist type, for strange as is the phenomenon, any one with the travel instincts of a turtle will admit that the mere mention “No tourists go *there*” is enough to place “there” among the most desired spots in the universe, such is the selfishness of human nature once beyond its domestic doorstep! To-morrow the Canal will alter this; it will bring Central America infinitely closer, and by so doing will create a

compelling fresh argument for the "See America First" enthusiasts, for no small area in America or abroad is more thoroughly worth seeing than is Central America.

So, you see, at heart this is an account of a tropical jaunt that left the jaunters vivid enthusiasts; and this, after all, is the only proper state of mind for a traveller to entertain, for it is so fiendishly easy to be out of sorts with things at home, without going to the ends of the world for further incentive to pessimism!

APPENDIX A

The following brief statistical information concerning the Central American countries is extracted *verbatim* from a handbook called *Latin America* prepared for the Pan-American Society of the United States by Frederic Brown of New York, and published in September, 1912.

COSTA RICA

Its area is 23,000 square miles, divided into seven provinces.

Its population is 379,000, of whom 3500 are native Indians. Immigration in 1911 amounted to 11,200.

The principal cities are:

San José	33,000
Heredia	7,500
Alajuela	6,000
Limon	6,000
Puntarenas	5,000
Cartago	5,000

Government

Suffrage is granted all self-supporting citizens twenty-one years of age.

The President is elected for a term of four years by an electoral college.

The Legislature is composed of a Congress made up of forty-three deputies, one to each eight thousand inhabitants, and is chosen by the electoral college, which is itself chosen by direct vote of the people.

The term of the Deputies is four years, one half retiring every two years.

There is a committee composed of five Deputies who represent Congress during its recess and advise the President on congressional matters.

The President is assisted by Secretaries of the Interior, Police, Agriculture, Foreign Affairs, Justice, Public Worship and Public Instruction, of War and Marine, and Finance, Commerce, and Public Works.

There is a Supreme Court of Justice, two Courts of Appeal, and a Court of Cassation.

Finance

The revenue of the country amounted to about \$4,025,000 in the year 1911-1912 and the expenditures amounted to about \$4,000,000.

The external debt is \$12,000,000, regularly served by part of the customs receipts.

Industry

Costa Rica is principally an agricultural country, its chief products being coffee and bananas. All the tropical products are cultivated. There is a considerable production of rubber and cabinet woods and miscellaneous products.

There are some gold mines in operation.

The total imports in 1910 were about \$8,000,000 and the exports about \$8,500,000. The United States occupies first place in both trades, with England second and Germany third.

GUATEMALA

Its area is about 48,000 square miles.

Its population is about 1,800,000, nearly sixty per cent. of which are pure Indians.

The capital and principal city is Guatemala, with about 125,000 inhabitants. Other cities are:

Quezaltenango	34,000
Coban	26,000
Totonicapam	25,000

Government

The President is elected for a term of six years by direct vote.

There is a National Assembly composed of sixty-nine members elected for four years by a direct vote of the people, and there is a Council of State of thirteen members elected in part by the National Assembly and in part chosen by the President.

The President is assisted in his duties by Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Government and Justice, Finance and Public Instruction, and War.

There is a Supreme Court, with six Courts of Appeal and twenty-six Courts of First Instance.

Industry

The principal products are coffee and bananas. The coffee production is largely in the hands of the Germans.

The cultivation of sugar is increasing.

Wheat and other products of the temperate zone are produced.

The forests of Guatemala are rich in cabinet and dye woods, considerable quantities of which are sent to the United States.

The public lands have been divided and are offered for sale, the maximum permitted to one person being about 1687 acres.

The uncultivated lands may be given to immigrants for colonisation.

Gold and silver are both mined in the republic and there are considerable deposits of salt.

Imports and Exports

The total exports of Guatemala were in 1909 about \$10,000,000 and the imports about \$5,000,000.

Finance

The income of the country is principally derived from customs and a revenue tax on liquors and tobacco.

The revenue of the country in 1910 was about \$3,500,000 and the expenditure about \$2,900,000.

The foreign debt amounts to about \$3,700,000 and there is an obligation for outstanding paper currency of about \$72,000,000 paper.

The paper currency of Guatemala is worth about six cents on the dollar.

HONDURAS

Its area is 46,000 square miles.

Its population is 553,000, the major proportion of which consists of Indians and the balance of pure Spanish descent.

The principal cities are:

Tegucigalpa	20,000
Juticalpa	15,000
Nacaome	12,000
Esperanza	11,000
Santa Rosa	10,000
Choluteca	10,000

Government

The President and Vice-President must be natives of Honduras and must be at least thirty years of age and are elected by direct vote for four years.

The legislative power is given to a Chamber of Deputies composed of forty-two members elected by direct vote for a period of four years.

There is a Supreme Court of three judges chosen by Congress for a period of four years, and there are also four Courts of Appeal.

The President is assisted in his duties by a Cabinet composed of five Ministers, Foreign Relations, Government, Justice, and Public Instruction, War, Finance and Public Works, and Agriculture.

Industry

Honduras is a rich country, but with little development.

The principal product of the soil is bananas.

Good tobacco is grown and its cultivation is increasing.

Cattle raising is extensively carried on.

The forests yield large quantities of cabinet and dye woods.

There is also considerable industry in the manufacture of panama hats.

The country is very rich in mineral resources.

Gold, platinum, silver, iron, and lead are found in practically every part of the republic.

Commerce

The total imports of the country in 1911 amounted to about \$2,600,000 and the exports to about \$2,450,000.

The United States occupies first place in the commerce of the country.

Finance

The revenue of the country is derived almost entirely from customs and liquor and tobacco monopolies.

The revenue and expenditures about balance, amounting to about \$3,800,000 yearly.

The external debt of Honduras amounts, with arrears of interest, to about \$114,000,000, the major portion of which amount is in dispute and has been subject to attempts at adjustment, but so far without success.

The internal debt amounts to about \$1,500,000.

The principal currency in circulation is silver and copper.

The little paper currency in the country is issued by the Bank of Honduras.

Communications

There are few roads, except one that connects the capital with the Pacific Coast ports.

There are about sixty miles of public railroads and an equal amount of plantation roads; several lines are projected.

Army and Navy

The regular army numbers at present about two thousand officers and men.

The effective reserve force of the country is calculated at about fifty thousand.

There is a navy consisting of two armed cutters.

The United States maintains consulates at Tegucigalpa and at Porto Cortes, with agencies at Bonaca, Roatan, Tela, Truxillo, San Pedro Sula, Amapala, San Juancito, and Ceiba.

NICARAGUA

Its area is 49,000 square miles.

Its population is 600,000, the bulk of which is pure Indian.

The principal cities are:

Leon	63,000
Managua	35,000
Granada	17,000
Matagalpa	16,000
Masaya	15,000
Jinotega	12,000

Government

The President of the country must be twenty-five years of age and a citizen of Nicaragua or of one of the Central American republics, and is elected for four years by direct suffrage.

The legislative power is given to a Congress consisting of thirty-six members, elected by direct vote for six years.

The President is aided in his duties by a Cabinet composed of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Public Instruction, Finance, Interior, Justice, War, Marine, and Public Works.

There is a Supreme Court and three Courts of Appeal.

Industry

Nicaragua is essentially an agricultural country, the chief products being coffee, sugar, and bananas. A considerable amount of cabinet and dye woods, as well as rubber, is produced.

Nicaragua is well adapted to cattle raising and there are about 1,200,000 head of cattle in the republic.

There are several gold mines, but the mineral industry is in its infancy.

Commerce

The total imports of the country in 1909 were \$2,500,000 in gold and the exports about \$3,900,000 gold.

The unit of monetary value is a silver peso, which fluctuates in accordance with the price of silver, and there is also a large quantity of government paper money of a nominal value.

Communications

There are 171 miles of railway, not counting a small amount of private lines on the plantations.

Army and Navy

The effective permanent army is usually placed at about four thousand men.

The war strength is calculated at about forty thousand men.

The United States maintains consulates at Bluefields, Corinto, and Managua, with an agency at San Juan del Sur.

SALVADOR

The smallest and most densely populated of the American republics.

Its area is 7,200 square miles.

Its population is 1,100,000, of which a very large proportion is Indian or mestizo.

There are about 200,000 foreigners in the republic.

The principal cities are:

San Salvador	60 000
Santa Ana	48,000
San Miguel	25,000
San Vicente	15,000
Sonsonate	15,000

Government

The President and Vice-President must be Salvadorians, at least thirty years of age, and are elected for a period of four years by direct vote of the nation.

The legislative power is given to a National Assembly of 142 Deputies, who must be at least twenty-five years of age and are elected by direct vote of the people.

All Salvadorians over twenty-one years of age possess the right to vote.

The President is assisted in his duties by a Ministry of four: Foreign Affairs, Justice and Worship and Public Instruction, War and Marine, Interior and Public Works, Education, Agriculture, and Finance.

There is a Supreme Court which appoints the judges of first instance. All other judges are appointed by the National Assembly.

Products

Salvador is an agricultural country, its principal product being coffee.

It also produces sugar, chocolate, and tobacco and other tropical produce.

The government is endeavoring to encourage the growing of cotton and in the highlands efforts are being made to produce the wheat required for home consumption.

There are known to be considerable quantities of mineral wealth but mining operations have not yet attained any considerable importance.

Imports and Exports

In 1910 the imports amounted to about \$3,700,000 and the exports to about \$7,300,000, in which coffee occupied first place.

The United States occupies first place in both trades, England being second and France and Germany following.

Finance

The principal money of the country is silver, having a value of about forty cents, fluctuating with the price of silver.

A gold standard has been adopted and the banks of Salvador are now engaged in the work of adapting the country to the new standard.

The outstanding foreign debt of the country in 1910 was about \$4,000,000.

Communications

There are 170 miles of railway in the country, with over 2000 miles of good cart roads.

Army and Navy

The immediate standing army of Salvador comprises six hundred officers and twenty thousand men.

The total number available for service having had military training is 3000 officers and 100,000 men.

The United States maintains a Consul at the capital, San Salvador.

APPENDIX B**The Monroe Doctrine**

In 1823, just ninety years ago, the "Monroe Doctrine" was promulgated in the following recommendation, contained in President Monroe's annual message to Congress.

"At the proposal of the Russian Imperial Government, made through the minister of the Emperor residing here, a full power and instructions have been transmitted to the minister of the United States at St. Petersburg to arrange by amicable negotiation the respective rights and interests of the two nations on the north-west coast of this continent. A similar proposal had been made by his Imperial Majesty to the Government of Great Britain, which has likewise been acceded to. The Government

of the United States has been desirous by this friendly proceeding of manifesting the great value which they have invariably attached to the friendship of the Emperor and their solicitude to cultivate the best understanding with his government. In the discussions to which this interest has given rise and in the arrangements by which they may terminate the occasion has been judged proper for asserting, as a principle in which the rights and interests of the United States are involved, that the American continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonisation by any European powers. . . .

"It was stated at the commencement of the last session that a great effort was then making in Spain and Portugal to improve the condition of the people of those countries, and that it appeared to be conducted with extraordinary moderation. It need scarcely be remarked that the result has been so far very different from what was then anticipated. Of all events in that quarter of the globe, with which we have so much intercourse and from which we derive our origin, we have always been anxious and interested spectators. The citizens of the United States cherish sentiments the most friendly in favour of the liberty and happiness of their fellow-men on that side of the Atlantic. In the wars of the European powers in matters relating to themselves we have never taken any part, nor does it comport with our policy so to do. It is only when our rights are invaded or seriously menaced that we resent injuries or make preparation for our defence. With the movements in this hemisphere we are of necessity more immediately connected, and by causes which must be obvious to all enlightened and impartial observers. The political system of the allied powers is essentially different in this respect from that of America. This difference proceeds from that which exists in their respective governments; and to the defence of our own, which has been achieved by the loss of so much blood and treasure, and matured by the wisdom of their most enlightened citizens, and under which we have enjoyed unexampled felicity, this whole nation is devoted. We owe it, therefore, to candour and to the amicable relations existing between the United

States and those powers, to declare that we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety. With the existing colonies or dependencies of any European power we have not interfered and shall not interfere. But with the governments who have declared their independence and maintained it, and whose independence we have, on great consideration and on just principles, acknowledged, we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them, or controlling in any other manner their destiny, by any European power in any other light than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States. In the war between those new governments and Spain we declared our neutrality at the time of their recognition, and to this we have adhered, and shall continue to adhere, provided no change shall occur which, in the judgment of the competent authorities of this government, shall make a corresponding change on the part of the United States indispensable to their security.

"The late events in Spain and Portugal show that Europe is still unsettled. Of this important fact no stronger proof can be adduced than that the allied powers should have thought it proper, on any principle satisfactory to themselves, to have interposed by force in the internal concerns of Spain. To what extent such interposition may be carried, on the same principle, is a question in which all independent powers whose governments differ from theirs are interested, even those most remote, and surely none more so than the United States.

"Our policy in regard to Europe, which was adopted at an early stage of the wars which have so long agitated that quarter of the globe, nevertheless remains the same, which is, not to interfere in the internal concerns of any of its powers; to consider the government *de facto* as the legitimate government for us; to cultivate friendly relations with it, and to preserve those relations by a frank, firm and manly policy, meeting, in all instances, the just claims of every power, submitting to injuries from none. But in regard to these continents circumstances are eminently and conspicuously different. It is impossible that the allied

powers should extend their political system to any portion of either continent without endangering our peace and happiness; nor can any one believe that our southern brethren, if left to themselves, would adopt it of their own accord. It is equally impossible, therefore, that we should behold such interposition in any form with indifference. If we look to the comparative strength and resources of Spain and those new governments, and their distance from each other, it must be obvious that she can never subdue them. It is still the true policy of the United States to leave the parties to themselves, in the hope that other powers will pursue the same course."

APPENDIX C

Bibliography

The following books, written in English, pertain to Central America, and may be of interest to readers of this volume. It is believed all are in print and obtainable; a far fuller list exists, and can be secured at any metropolitan library. The very extensive bibliography of Panama is omitted here.

- BURY, HERBERT, *A Bishop amongst Bananas*. 1912. (Includes Panama, Nicaragua, and Guatemala.)
- BUTTERWORTH, HEZEKIAH, *Traveller Tales of the Pan-American Countries*. *Central America*. 1910.
- PALMER, FREDERICK, *Central America and Its Problems*. 1910.
- WALEFFE, MAURICE DE, *The Fair Land of Central America*. 1911.
- ENOCK, REGINALD, *The Great Pacific Coast*. 1910.
- WINTER, NEVIN O., *Guatemala and Her People of To-day*. 1909.
- MARTIN, PERCY F., *Salvador of the Twentieth Century*. 1911.
- BANCROFT, HUBERT HOWE, *History of the Pacific States*. 1883.
- BRIGHAM, WM. T., *Guatemala, the Land of the Quetzal*. 1887.
- CHARLES, CECIL, *Honduras, the Land of Great Depths*. 1890.
- DAVIS, R. H., *Three Gringos in Venezuela and Central America*. 1896.

FISHER, HORACE N., *Ethnology and Commercial Importance of Latin America and the West Indies*. 1909.

KEANE, A. H., *Compendium of Geography of Central America and West Indies*. 1901.

MAUDSLEY, A. C. and A. P., *Glimpse at Guatemala*. 1899.

VINCENT, FRANK, *In and Out of Central America*. 1896.

MORLAN, A. P., *A Hoosier in Honduras*. 1897.

The Pan-American Union, at Washington, D. C., publishes several handbooks upon Central American republics, and has complete lists of publications in all languages dealing with Latin-American history and description. The monthly magazine of the Union, *The Bulletin*, contains interesting and timely material.

Other North American organisations especially interested in Latin America are the Pan-American Society of the United States and the Hispanic Society, both situated in New York. The latter has a very comprehensive library.



South America To-day

A Study of Conditions Social, Political, and
Commercial, in Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil

By **Georges Clemenceau**

Formerly Prime Minister of France

8vo. \$2.00 net. (By mail, \$2.20)

As the work of one of the most brilliant of European politicians and writers the book is likely to command wide attention. The author was afforded exceptional opportunities to study at first hand their institutions and systems of government. He came in touch with many of the presidents of these republics, with cabinet officers and officials of rank; he visited their prisons, their asylums, and their educational institutions; he got an insight into their industries both in city and country. His comments are based on full knowledge and are vitalized by stimulating contrasts and comparisons with Old World practices.

"He provides the general reader with a remarkably graphic picture of scenic attractions, and those particularly interested in sociology, anthropology, ethnology, botany, and zoölogy will find their interests studied here."—*The Independent*.

G. P. Putnam's Sons

New York

London

"Notable among works of exploration and discovery."—*The Outlook*.

In the Amazon Jungle

Adventures in a Remote Part of the Upper
Amazon River, Including a Sojourn
among the Cannibal Indians

By **Algot Lange**

With an Introduction by
Frederick S. Dellenbaugh

"A more remarkable narrative of strange experiences and perilous adventures would be hard to find among the books of many years. . . . His training as a student of natural history and botany has stood him in good stead, for while his remarkable book is in no sense a learned disquisition, its narrative is made more valuable by the scientific basis of its observation of wild life and plants. This feature is a fortunate aid to its entire credibility, for here are stories which might be regarded as were those of Marco Polo."—*Springfield Republican*.

"A description more wonderful than the work of Paul du Chaillu, and holds the reader as intensely as the stirring narrative of Stanley's adventures in Africa."

San Francisco Chronicle.

8°. *With 86 Illustrations from Original Photographs by the Author.* \$2.50 net.

(By mail, \$2.75)

G. P. Putnam's Sons

New York

London

Little Cities of Italy

By André Maurel

Translated by Helen Gerard

Author of "The Story of the Thirteen Colonies"

2 vols. Sold Separately. Beautifully Illustrated.

Each \$2.50 net. By mail, \$2.70

First Series. With 32 Illustrations

Florence—San Gimignano—Monte Oliveto—
Pisa—Lucca—Prato—Pistoia—Arezzo—Lecco
—Bergamo—Brescia—Verona—Vicenza—
Padua—Mantua—Arqua

Second Series. With 40 Illustrations

Milan—Pavia—Piacenza—Parma—Modena—
Bologna—Ferrara—Ravenna—Pesaro—
Rimini—Urbino—Perugia—Assisi—
Spello—Montefalco—Spoleto—
Orvieto—Viterbo, etc.

M. Maurel has wandered from town to town, painting in vivid colors his impressions of their historic and artistic aspects, showing with keen insight how closely allied are these, what each owes to the other, and how indebted is the present to both. To the lover of Italy the book will afford fresh delight, and to those whose Italy consists only of Venice, Florence, Rome, and Naples these little sketches will open new and charming fields of interest.

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

NEW YORK

LONDON

Trails and Tramps in Alaska and Newfoundland

By William S. Thomas

Author of "Hunting Big Game with Gun and Kodak"

12°. With 150 Illustrations. \$2.50 net

By mail, \$2.75

The author gives an account not only of trips along the coast and into the interior of Alaska and Newfoundland, but of excursions to, and nature studies in, many other little-visited parts of the American continent. There are many interesting photographs of scenic wonders and animal life remote from civilization, observed under peculiar circumstances and at opportune moments. There are accounts of bear and wild-sheep hunting, raccoon hunting and rabbit hunting with ferrets; but equally interesting are the accounts of the game that the author bagged with his camera and the description of the habits and the life of animals and of aborigines whom the author ran across in remote parts. Camp yarns and adventure season the pages of this interesting volume of nature studies.

G. P. Putnam's Sons

New York

London

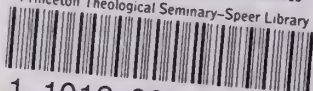




F1432 .P99

The southland of North America, rambles

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 00005 3712